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by Henry Nelson Snyder

GOOD-BYE, LITTLE COLLEGE

A few years ago there came out of England a tender little book entitled,—GOOD-BYE, MR. CHIPS. It warmed the hearts of thousands of readers on both sides of the Atlantic. In the Dickens' manner at its best, it is the story of the Master of an ancient English school, beloved of his "boys", with an odd humor that fails to hide his deep affection for them as they are forever saying, with a lump in the throat, GOOD-BYE, MR. CHIPS. At the end, when the shadows are gathering, he overhears one of the waiting friends whisper,—“Pity, he never had any children”, “Yes,—umph—I have. Thousands of 'em, and all boys”, he murmurs with a chuckle. And then he fell into his last sleep, calling again the roll of “his boys”.

But back of the story of the lovable teacher whose life was a rich composite of laughter and tears, the reader somehow senses the atmosphere of the small institution that is congenial to the keeping and growing of personalities like Mr. Chips. And then one must think of the hundreds of small colleges scattered

throughout this Nation, some gone to dust, others yet surviving, whose halls are hallowed by the memories of their own "Mr. Chips", whose life story only awaits another James Hilton to touch again the heart of the world. They all had such as he and when we tell him "Good-bye", do we not somehow have a haunting fear that we are saying "Good-bye" to the type of institution that made his sort possible,—the Little College of yesterday?

Believe it or not, they were all little colleges once,—Harvard, William and Mary, Yale, Columbia (King's), Brown, Rutgers, Dartmouth. Beginning with Harvard in 1636 and ending with Dartmouth in 1769, this group of eight colleges were all founded within less than one hundred and fifty years from the dates of the first settlement of the English in this country. In the very shadow of the mystery and menace of the wilderness they were set up to provide in the new land an educated ministry and to keep burning the old torch of learning under strange and unfamiliar conditions,—in the quaint five hundred year-old phrase from a founder of one of the ancient Oxford colleges, "to supply fit persons for the service of God in Church and State."

This is to remind us again that the religious motive was at the heart of these foundations, and that each was rigidly sectarian in its origins. Pennsylvania might try at first to be independent, but it was not long before it passed, for a time any-way, into Presbyterian control. The truth of the matter is, no other motive than that of a mighty religious faith would have been strong enough to make the adventure of establishing and maintaining institutions of higher learning under the then existing conditions. Besides, the colonists had no other standards and incentives to go by. The Oxford and Cambridge colleges from which they drew their inspiration and models were all, almost without exception, children of the church in some way or another.

Moreover, the colleges of Cambridge and Oxford furnished them their curriculum, policies, and methods. Where possible each maintained residential halls (dormitories), close personal oversight of a small group of adolescent boys, and taught the same curriculum that had been handed down from the English institutions virtually unchanged for half a thousand years,—Mathematics, Greek, Latin, a little History, Mental and Moral Science,

Divinity, and after awhile a scant view, under the name of Natural Philosophy, of what science there was.

Of course, at this long distance such a curriculum looks meagre and limited, but those who taught it were not troubled by any thought that it was not entirely suitable for their day. It was all there was, and as inadequate as it seems to us, it was enough for them. And who shall say they were not justified by the fruits that came out of the lean curriculum in terms of the men who went through it? These little colleges trained the leadership that did the thinking and directed the intellectual currents of the American Revolution,—the Founding Fathers, as they are called. For a knowledge of past history, for a profound understanding of the principles of government, for the ability wisely to apply these principles to the uses of a free people working out the world's greatest experiment in politics, for the capacity to express their thoughts in noble speech, oral and written, that is yet classic,—they were unsurpassed in their day among the thinkers of England or France. Yes, there must have been some unusual quality of virtue in these little colleges for so much sheer human greatness to have come out of them. Somebody some day is going to be wise enough to turn aside from "tests", "measurements", "adjusting the schools to the needs of an evolving democracy", "integration", "coördination", "correlation",—from all of these he will take time out to try to discover just what it was in the methods, the objectives that gave so much real ability the chance to find itself and devote its skills to the high uses of human society. It may be that such an one will find that the big business of education is not so terrifyingly complex after all, but is a rather simple matter when it comes to the essentials.

But these first little colleges had a sort of biological power of reproductivity. After the Nation had established itself, from the year 1800 on for the next fifty or sixty years, there took place one of the world's greatest movements of emigration. From the seaboard over the Blue Ridge into the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys and then across the Plains and up the slopes of the Rockies to the shores of the farthest ocean, a population was on the march once again to conquer a wilderness and to transplant old cultures into new conditions. All along the march, where groups settled themselves into communities with hopes of permanency, they set up

little "Yales", little "Harvards", little "Princetons", because among them were graduates of these institutions, particularly ministers, and now again religious faith asserts itself to repeat under these new conditions what had been done on the borders of the Atlantic. Moreover, the founding of the University of Virginia and other state universities and the spread of deistic thinking, an importation from godless France, in the early years of the century sent a shiver of fear through all the religious denominations. The result was sectarian institutions sprang up everywhere, and there was hardly a section of the Nation that did not witness the establishment of one or more.

Of course, many of them died, dotting the whole country with college grave-yards, but in spite of the ridicule that has been cast upon them by later educational commentators their usefulness need not be underestimated. In out of the way places, imperfect as they were, they kept alive the traditions of learning, and maintained a faith in it in the midst of the crude, raw ways of frontier living, creating centers of a sort of culture that was at least for better than none. And so if it is good-bye Little College, it is with the memory that it did not live wholly in vain. While it lasted, as poverty-stricken as it was, it was a beacon of light in a dark place, a rallying point for even a brief time of the undying things of the spirit, faith in what religion and education stand for and a willingness to sacrifice to the utmost that youth might not entirely lose the opportunities that religion and education offer. Little colleges they were, but from them once again as of old sprang men and women who did big things for the Nation, building that larger America which expanded so marvelously from 1800 to 1900 upon foundations laid by the men who had come from the little colleges of the older states.

It is worth saying over and over again they did not live in vain. Their service is writ large in the life of the Nation. And some of them did survive, and are even yet rendering a like service, and this in spite of the overshadowing growth of the tax-supported universities in every State. Relating themselves to the free public high schools as a part of a state system of education and reducing higher education to a minimum in the matter of cost to the youth of the state, it would seem that they were introducing such competition as to make impossible the existence of

the smaller private institutions, depending as they did largely upon students' fees for support. And so educational philosophers and prophets began soon to say,—“Good-bye, Little College.” But the farewell from this standpoint proved premature. Its friends still believed in it, erected for it new buildings, added to its libraries and laboratories, increased its endowments, and continued to send to it a small select, homogeneous student body. This student body might seem distressingly few compared with the thousands at the neighboring state university and the offering of its curriculum but a mite in contrast with the multifarious chain-store offerings of the university, yet out of all proportion to its numbers, from their small student groups such colleges would send forth a leadership in both number and quality little short of amazing.

The little colleges had hardly caught their breath from the struggles of the competition with the growing state universities and had found they need not after all die on this account, when the various “standardizing agencies” with their “Carnegie units”, laid a kind of strangle-hold upon them. So much endowment, so many books in the Library, so much apparatus in the laboratories, so much money spent on each, so many professors, so many hours per week for each, so much money paid them, so many Ph.D.'s among them, so many students per class,—here are things to worry over, and one must conform or suffer a sort of educational ostracism. The little college might unfold its long list of distinguished Alumni, point to its undisputed record of great educational service, to a magic way it has always had of awakening latent talent in youth and somehow training it for greatness and achievement,—but to no purpose. Such things do not count in the new day that had come to education. They cannot well be expressed in the figures asked by the questionnaires. So again it's “Good-bye, Little College”, and so also once more the Little College will not accept good-bye, but sets itself busily to work to tell its friends what's happening, and they in turn get busy and the money is forthcoming “to meet all requirements”. The result is it takes its place in academic good company, still among the living but wondering all the time what has been the real

honest-to-goodness gain, educationally speaking, and also wondering what's going to be done to it next.

And things have already happened to some of these little colleges in the last fifty or seventy-five years. By the chance of location they found themselves planted in the midst of great centers of population, or close to them. These centers of population represented not only aggregations of people but also enormous concentrations of wealth,—Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Syracuse, for example. With the growth of both, the colleges responded to be transformed into huge amorphous urban universities, while partly national in scope, yet essentially of and for the cities with which and by which they have grown. Only on certain historic occasions, anniversaries, is one reminded of that past, essentially religious in its beginnings, back into which the roots of each go. But the fact is the big sprawling thing it now is bears no shadow of resemblance to the little college of the long ago, and it could not even if it wanted to or tried to. Time and circumstance have wiped out its farthest past. In the hope that they may become like one of these, even some of the smaller colleges have moved to one of these urban centers, bidding, of course, farewell to what it had been in the dream of a bigger thing it may become. The matter here is that it seems that the Little College doesn't stay little if it can help it. This isn't hard to understand when one considers what not a few of the students of education have been saying about the future of the small college, most of them talking from the high platforms of the big institutions, and some of them bearing great names and should be speaking with authority when they tell the little college good-bye. For instance, fifty years ago, President Harper of the University of Chicago, prophesied their end, though he did suggest that they might survive if they would demote themselves to the status of junior colleges and prepare students for the third year of the larger institutions. Now, the junior colleges have broken out like a rash on the face of American education. Of course, some of the small institutions, but not from any advice from President Harper and others who thought as he thought, did fold up and vanish from the educational field, and still others did become Junior Colleges, but they died or shrank up under the pressure of circumstance. They seemed not to be needed where they were.

But while hundreds, on this account, went the way of all flesh, other hundreds are yet with us, with increased resources to work with and exercising a greater influence than ever. And once more they have refused to accept the farewells of the prophets of doom.

And even now, fifty years after President Harper's prophesy of death or change for the Little College, the Chancellor of New York University, reviewing higher education during the last twenty years from his metropolitan tower has this to say of institutions on private foundations: "Impressed by huge sums devoted to a small group, the public has forgotten the number and variety of the 'have not' colleges that spot the country, kept alive by local or sectarian prides, pressures, and sacrifices. Any realistic approach would certainly doom some of these as hopeless, but the strength of the pressures which preserve them is amazing." "The have-nots" are, of course, the little colleges, but what do they not have? A polyglot student body, seething with alien and semi-alien youth, a melting pot that will not melt, a scattered array of buildings for all sorts of multiple uses, and a "hand-me-down", "Sears-Roebuck" variegated type of educational offerings.

Such things certainly the little "have-not" colleges cannot hope to have, but what have they? What are some of the "pressures" that make their preservation so "amazing"? To begin with, most of them are located in the provinces, in relatively small communities made up, predominantly, of people of the older American stock,—in the main, still a God-fearing, Church-going folk, from whom come the patronage and support of the little college. These folk have convictions, real convictions, that no education is safe for the individual or for the country that leaves the religious motive and the spirit of Christ out of the process that develops human personality, that pure intellectualism or unalloyed vocationalism in education are both dangerous and even vicious in what they do to character—that most fundamental element in the training of youth. Moreover, they believe that political, religious, and social pressures create conditions that make it all but impossible for other types of institutions to put such values into higher education, and that if they do not do it, it will not be done, and the country is in peril. Such views of education belong to the imponderables of the spirit, to the idealisms of faith

that persist in placing a religious estimate on the worth of individual personality and in counting the foundations of any society insecure that has not in it Christian principles of living. People with these views of education believe profoundly that their colleges, independent of State control, are needed to preserve that America which their ancestors set up in the long ago, and that by maintaining these colleges they are really protecting the Nation against alien and subversive "isms" and any sort of totalitarian dictatorship. Of course, they may be mistaken in all this, yet they are willing to sacrifice for it, and a "realistic approach" to the matter must recognize that here we are dealing with noble and powerful human motives that endure because those who are led by them think they are essential to the welfare of church and state. And one may venture to say that ill fares this America when institutions that represent such motives vanish from the land or lose too much of their influence. In these days of intellectual confusion and spiritual chaos no force that seeks to magnify the worth of the individual and to make righteousness and the will of God prevail should be allowed to grow feeble. With civilization apparently gone bankrupt in so many directions, it may be that the "Little College" is called to a new assertion of its mission for a time like this! We may well close this phase of the matter with a quotation from Walter Lippmann. In the *New York Herald Tribune* on the subject of "The Forgotten Foundations", he writes: "The liberties we talk about defending today were established by men who took their conception of man from the great central religious traditions of Western civilization, and the liberties we inherit can almost certainly not survive the abandonment of that tradition. Perhaps the ordeal through which mankind is passing may be necessary, for it may be the only way in which modern man can recover the faith by which free and civilized people may live."

But in recent days the good-bye is said with a new sort of emphasis,—“Little College, merge, correlate, coöperate, or—die!” There are too many of them, and their constituencies are not able to furnish either enough students or money to keep them going. Some have seen the light, and have merged; others would like to if they only could. But it is hard thing to kill a college, even

when it seems to be dying of its own lack of vitality. In its death-throes it has a way of discovering friends it did not have before its existence was threatened. And these friends with the Alumni decline to be satisfied with the new gold star diplomas from the institution into which they must be merged. It is not easy legally to adopt the children of one Alma Mater into another, neither can college history, legends, loyalties be well merged. Men and women gather about the graves of the old, feeling that something like murder has been committed. This is not to say that the homicide has not been justifiable, but only to suggest what most "mergers" are like.

And the other way of dying as an individual entity is in the direction of correlation and coöperation,—“integration” with a larger plan and richer programme, becoming a “unit” of a “University Center”, headed by a sort of educational “Holding Company”. The appeal in this arises partly from the great American fallacy of bigness,—“the bigger, the better” conception. The little institution imagines that something of its smallness disappears in its being related to the larger “set-up”,—by a kind of magic it becomes big, too. Of course, nobody says anything like this. The arguments follow the usual lines for any sort of merger, industrial, ecclesiastical, or educational,—saving in overhead, reduction of duplication, coöperative use of common resources, greater production and distribution, and a wider community service.

All this may be true and the merger ought to be, but the fact is in one more way we are bidding farewell to the Little College as such, and with its own consent and connivance. It will naturally have the assurance that it will keep its individual “entity”. But can it? Its students will be shunted around from one member institution to another to take advantage of the “richer offerings” made possible by the coöperative educational enterprise, and as its own students will be visiting members of certain classrooms, so also its own classrooms will have few or many of the same kind of visitors. Other relationships of a similar nature can easily be conceived of, social, educational, and otherwise, and then, with that certain amount of diffusion and dispersion that goes with the “correlation”, what becomes of that central unity of life called the college, with its sentimental composite of tradi-

tion, ideals, and those enriching intimacies that grow out of common experiences in a one Campus way of living,—all making up that individualized reality,—known as a College? The question here raised is not that this is worth preserving but only that can it be preserved by transforming it into a division of a larger whole. Is it not therefore another gesture forward telling the little college good-bye?

And now there is another phase of the matter that suggests that these smaller institutions have themselves seemed rather easily inclined to bid farewell to at least a part of what they have been. In their beginnings they were all children of the church, frankly, purposely so, and they wore without shame the descriptive label—"sectarian". And that is what they were. They meant, aggressively, without apology, to train men in a certain form of Christian doctrine, and they were propagandists of a creed they believed in with genuine convictions. And they did not much mind the charge of narrowness that was directed against them on this account. In time, however, the word, "sectarian", acquired disagreeable associations, and then they became "denominational" institutions, that is, they are owned and controlled by a Church. But other influences came in,—the necessity of being first of all educational enterprises, the importance of being free from ecclesiastical domination, the ability to get from individuals and organizations a better financial support than the church has ever given,—these with other influences have brought them to call themselves "church-related", or "church-affiliated" colleges.

This shifting of names may indicate something deeper than the fact that direct control by the church is not so strong as it once was and that the ties binding these institutions to a church have become feebler. It may also mean that the religious emphasis itself has grown weaker, that in the effort to meet the requirements of strictly educational standards, these institutions have softened or even let go the controlling religious motives that made them so powerful in training a leadership that was both intellectual and spiritual. Without these motives are they not just another little college that may have really lost its soul, and is therefore no longer able to make that enriching contribution to

American life that was once, and is even yet, its glory as a college?

Two hundred years after the beginning of ancient Oxford, that is, in the year 1379, William of Wykeham, having risen from lowly estate to high position and great wealth, and wanting "to give to others the advantages which he lacked", founded New College at Oxford, and richly endowed it with buildings and resources. And this is what for,—“To supply fit persons for the service of God in Church and State.” In 1940, five hundred and sixty-one years later, from a little college, located on a plateau of the Cumberland Mountains, whose buildings are beautifully suggestive of those of old Oxford, come words carrying the same thought for our modern days,—

That THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH shall always be the mother of Godliness, Discipline, and Freedom, and expect this of her sons—“That they shall not seek their own gain but that they shall serve their people, and shall be ever as Christ’s soldiers, gentle in all things, valiant in action, and steadfast in adversity.”

And so across the centuries one hears the statement of the undying purpose of the kind of education to which the little colleges have dedicated themselves, and so long as men value the worth of the things of the spirit for the service of the common life, and so long as these colleges themselves keep faith, though under changed conditions, with the purpose that gave them birth, they need not accept anybody’s good-bye as authentic and final. As in the past, so today and tomorrow, they will gather to themselves enough friends who, understanding their worth and the invaluable quality of their contribution to human society, will furnish the support needed for enlarged usefulness. But the little college must keep faith, or it is “Good-bye, Little College”!

by Alastair MacDonald Taylor

TO W. H. H.

Upon his having picked up another Aldine rarity. . .

The gold of Benvenuto, and the anchored crest of Aldus,
The younger Holbein's Windsor prints, and Petrarch's sonnets
rare;

The Fool of sly Cervantes, and the *Folly* of Erasmus,
The dusty incunabula which Tasso found so fair.

The smell and feel of vellum soft which Niccoli collated,
And with a miser's trembling clutch laid on the sagging shelf;
An impulse Chrysoloras brought to thirst unsatiated:
That quest for culture's pigments to illuminate the Self.

With treasures of the *quattrocento* have you stirred your passion,
And still you see the road to Rome the elder Borgia trod:
Or with a Machiavellian smile you mark Lucrezia's fashion
By which she bade Godspeed to guests who straightway sped to
God!

Yes, William, you have smashed the dial, and sent the hourglass
crashing:

You swore to loot the Renaissance, and well you've kept your
vow!—

But be as Tintoretto—strike with brush and colors splashing,
And on the canvas of *this* age depict a New Birth now!

by Claude E. Jones

PROLETARIAN WRITING AND JOHN STEINBECK

A great deal has been written during the past two years concerning John Steinbeck. Recently—since the publication and picture production of *GRAPES OF WRATH*—he has been hailed as the great new prophet of proletarian literature. Critics cite the “prose epic” of the *Joads* as definite proof that this new light in the literary firmament is on the Labor side, that his heart bleeds for the exploited masses.

This has been said of others in the past—of Vincent Sheean and James Farrell, of Eugene O'Neill and Clifford Odets, even of Jim Tully. Some years ago it was remarked of Jack London and Stephen Crane. One would rather expect the critics, especially the socially-conscious critics, and above all the Marxists, to wait, to weigh the spirit, the ostensible purpose and the final bulk of a man's work, before they claim the new Moses. It is with this problem of the proletarian novel and its relation to some few authors, including John Steinbeck, that I am concerned here.

It would seem that whenever a creative artist concerns himself with the lower classes, with the stuff of proletarian writing, he lays himself open to criticism, usually in the form of either disgust or enthusiasm, on the score of subject matter. He is likely to be called a proletarian writer, an apostle of reform, an inciter to revolt—all because of his milieu, his setting.

There are, as a matter of fact, almost as many reasons for using such settings as the slums as there are reasons for writing at all. Further, one comes increasingly to feel that here it is not the material, but the use to which the author puts it, that really matters. Thus it is that the term “proletarian literature” is usually misleading. The critic is faced with the necessity of establishing accurate criteria for this, as for any other handy

term. He must differentiate works falling within this class from those which do not quite enter it.

Proletarian literature has as theme the necessity for establishing a Marxian economy. Again, such literature almost inevitably concerns itself with what the author considers, or wants his readers to consider, the actual living and working conditions of the proletariat. Third, the theme of revolution, the overthrow of the existing economy, is usually stated, frequently by one of two characters: either (a) the protagonist himself, or (b) some other character who exercises considerable influence on the protagonist. Another feature of proletarian literature is that it has, by and large, international implications; it preaches "Workers of the World Unite", not "Workers of this Industry, in this Place, at this Time, Unite". This last, the international quality of proletarian writing, may or may not appear in the individual work; but in the whole work of any prolific proletarian writer it is extremely apt to appear.

Now, when we come to evaluate the work of any author who concerns himself exclusively, or even noticeably, with the poor, there are several points of departure. He may be a proletarian writer. On the other hand, he may be one of several other kinds of writer, or not definitely identifiable at all.

An interesting example is George Gissing. Gissing led a harsh life, a life which made him extremely bitter. Only in a few of his letters and *THE PRIVATE PAPERS* does he get away from this bitterness. Some of his work, especially *NEW GRUB STREET*, uses a failure as protagonist. This is also generally true of the tales in *HOUSE OF COBWEBS*.

Further, in *WORKERS OF THE DAWN* Gissing treats a cross-section of London not far removed in type from the setting of Gorki's *LOWER DEPTHS*. Unlike the Russian, however, Gissing dwells on his wretches, savours their wretchedness, forces the reader to the conclusion that the author is personally concerned. And this is true. Gissing loathed the poor, the foul and shambling wrecks among whom he had for a while to live. They revolted him, and he dwells on their deformities, their loathsomeness, as another man would suck an aching tooth or finger a broken rib. There is in Gissing's attitude a masochism, a self-laceration, excruciatingly painful for author and reader alike. Pain affords,

however, a rather popular vicarious thrill; so we read Gissing. He might, if it were not for his obvious distaste for the subject—the personal equation forced on his readers—be called a naturalist. As it is, there is no technical term for the Gissing type of thing except realism, a name lately grown flaccid with much prostitution. Certainly, Gissing is not a proletarian writer, although he frequently deals with proletarian stuff.

Another literary type frequently confounded with proletarian writing is the literature of brutality, or pain. Stephen Crane once said that pain is the proper source of all great literature, and surely much of his own writing proves that he meant it. Expiation and some self-respect come to the hero of *THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE* through mental torment; the same result appears again and again in the short stories of *THE LITTLE REGIMENT* and *THE OPEN BOAT* and *WOUNDS IN THE RAIN*. But in most of these cases there is physical pain as well, usually as motivating force. Himself high-strung and easily hurt, Crane shows an almost morbid pre-occupation with such phenomena.

Crane usually deals with the lower classes—with soldiers and sailors and laborers and cowhands and poor women. In *MAGGIE* he traces the inevitable downfall of a slum girl; in *GEORGE'S MOTHER*, the spiritual and moral disintegration of a poor young man. In each case, the conditioning factor is poverty. Crane's soldiers are usually nameless, are types, are unromantic. Brutality, fear, hatred, courage—these are more predominant than social grace. He handles material which another author, especially a modern, would be apt to use for preachment, to treat didactically; but he doesn't preach. Many of his characters are exploited, true, but we seldom see them, nor do they usually think of themselves, as members of a class. Frequently there is no sympathy at all. In other words, this is proletarian material without the treatment necessary for the *genre*.

Hemingway, who is preoccupied with brutality rather than with pain as such, is in some ways close kin to Crane. The brutalized frequently come from the dregs, as do many of Crane's characters; but Hemingway watches them with almost perfect detachment. In such wise do small boys hurt animals, asking themselves: "What does it feel like? What will he do now?" Only in the battered counter-espionage agent in *FIFTH COLUMN* does Heming-

way learn the ultimate lesson of pain—sympathy. And FIFTH COLUMN is the closest the author comes to proletarian writing.

Other writers about the proletariat we have aplenty—Faulkner, Caldwell, Farrell, literally hundreds of others—but a galaxy, even a pleiade, of top-flight proletarian authors—no. A few at most; and even with some of them the classification is debatable.

Take, for example, an earlier writer interested in the masses, in labor, in revolution: Jack London. London is, as Professor Whipple points out, primarily an individualist. And a muddle-headed individualist at that—so far as his own philosophy is concerned. In him social purpose is buried under successive layers of fatty tissue: individualism, survival of the fittest, the Superman idea. London doubtless found himself occasionally sympathetic to the labor movement. He wrote essays to show the necessity of revolution, of solidarity among the workers. In the semi-autobiographical MARTIN EDEN he seems to consider his protagonist a member of the proletariat, faced with their problems, forced to their conclusions. In THE IRON HEEL he shows labor prone, the iron heel of capitalism raised to stamp it out. Yet throughout all this we are unconvinced. Even in the socialistic works, the cry of the superman, the superbeast, is heard. London's humanitarianism is frequently evident, as in IN THE ABYSS, but usually overshadowed by his primordialism. He is never clear-thinking enough to settle what seems to have been a nagging question for much of his adult life—the proper relationship between the Superman and the Masses. And this dichotomy forbids his inclusion among the proletarian writers.

One contemporary of London's and ours who goes the whole way is Upton Sinclair. In novel after novel he examines and vituperates the phases of Capitalist America which interest him. His panacea is Socialism, and, while it leads to industrial strife, does not with him necessarily end in world-wide revolution. The most popular, and justly so, of his novels is THE JUNGLE in which, by using a protagonist who is no superman, Sinclair enlists the reader's humanitarian interest in the problem, even if he fails to satisfy the reader's intellect with the solution. The way out comes too pat, we hear the machine creak, and unless we are already indoctrinated we are not swept along.

This raises what is in some respects the most important prob-

lem faced by the proletarian writer—the necessity of selling the cure as well as establishing the diagnosis. Scenes and conditions to raise pity in the most hard-hearted reader abound almost everywhere. Given the power of description and ability to humanize characters, the writer has little difficulty in arousing the reader. This is enough for many authors, but not for the proletarian, the Marxist, creator. He must carry on, must raise the flag of revolution, must drive the reader along towards a Communist Nirvana. This is not easy, even when the reader is sympathetic, is convinced that there is a need for social therapy. Usually, he is still dubious of this cure.

Now, Communism, like any other system requiring for the most part voluntary coöperation, primarily appeals—at least in this country—to two groups.

On the one hand are those who are convinced that they are hopeless as individuals, that only by proletarian solidarity and revolution can they partake in some measure of what they feel is their just and due share of the world's goods. This group as a whole is not intellectual; it does not form a high percentage of what is referred to, somewhat loosely, as the "Reading Public". The author who would live by the proletariat must confine himself, by and large, to writing for labor papers and for the little theatre groups nourished by union and party organizations. He must, in other words, confine himself to simple media, employ simple techniques, forego the pleasure, or advantages, or inner necessity (and sometimes all three) of individualism. He must identify himself with the Cause, explain it, not criticize it, and do the work which his hand finds to do. Such a writer rarely reaches his peers—his mental peers. At least that has usually been true in this country.

The second group comprises, for the most part, intellectuals who are sympathetic, or at least familiar, with Communist doctrine. For them, the proletarian author employs techniques, utilizes material, aimed at the "Reading Public", especially at that part of it which is not yet thoroughly indoctrinated. Of course, if he is clearly enough identified with the movement, if his solutions follow the somewhat strictly drawn party line, he will be received with acclaim by those who are already convinced. Whether or not he is a competent artist. This appears in the New

MASSSES reviews; and the reverse, in Mr. Hicks's *THE GREAT TRADITION*. To be of much value to his party, to his movement, however, the proletarian artist must go beyond this. He must convince the wavering, the not-quite-sure, even the previously unsympathetic, reader. And herein lies the real test of his power.

Readers are easily convinced that a given situation is bad. This is done, for the most part, by appeals to emotion. And it is for emotion that most of the "Reading Public" reads. Grant that Mr. R. P. is convinced—he is even on fire to assist some particular group of the downtrodden, the "underprivileged". The author suggests that only one solution exists—a complete reversal of the social structure. These "creatures in God's image", this "Man with a Hoe", must take control of the government, must reorganize industry, farming, business. The writer appeals to the reader's "common sense".

"Look," he says, "here is a horrible situation. This cannot be permitted to go on, can it? No, of course it can't. What can we do about it, you and I? Nothing. Nothing at all. The world has always been full of humanitarians like you and me. And what good did they do? Very little. No, my friend, we can't do anything. It is up to the masses. They're the ones who have to act, to organize, to take over. Let's help them, let's make it easier for them. But, of course, probably your job, certainly your bank balance and your investments and your insurance, won't be worth a damn after we succeed."

And the reader, who is still feeling sympathetic towards the poor, miserable downtrodden victims of what the author calls Social Injustice, thinks, "Terrible. Such conditions mustn't be permitted. Time for the government to do something. Or we'll have a revolution. As this writer fellow says. But if we do what he wants, everything I've worked for will go to smash. Anyway, he's trying to convert me, so things probably aren't as bad as he paints them."

Mr. R. P. is just naturally suspicious of systems. And of the writers who propose systems.

Most authors interested in the proletariat are content to draw their picture. This may be true because of the difficulties I have mentioned. One suspects that it usually is. For the most part, one feels that the artist, like Mr. R. P., is shocked by what

he sees—but more strongly because at first hand—and is driven to use the material because of its inherent power. On the other hand, he may feel that others more practical than he will find a way to effect reform.

Reform literature—lashing at an evil without suggesting the perfect antidote—is of long and distinguished heritage in English. Its practitioners have included such diverse figures as Swift and George Eliot, Johnson and him whom we call Langland, Shelley and Harriet Beecher Stowe, Whitman, and Dickens. And surely few, if any, of the great satirists and social-novelists who have written in the English language had intellectual or doctrinaire roots in the proletariat, however clearly they might see its problems and however sympathetic they might be towards its misery.

Take, for example here, Herman Melville. The author of *BILLY BUDD* and *WHITE JACKET* had an axe to grind, and grind it he did with many sparks. The American Navy had, he felt, too many short-comings, and he—having served in it before the mast—was the obvious person to bring these defects to the attention of the American taxpayers who foot the Navy bill. In *WHITE JACKET* he not only points out these injustices and warns against their perpetuation, but he suggests reforms. These are not to be brought about by overturning the social system, however, but by the intervention of a civilian legislature goaded on by indignant readers of Melville's book. Americans would never permit such conditions to prevail, Melville felt—and the sequel proved him right. The reforms he suggested were carried out—possibly because of his presentation of the case, pedestrian though that case frequently was in his hands. American literature, particularly what is becoming known as the "economic" or reform novel, abounds in such presentation of social ulcers. And, as here, the appeal is usually emotional, at least for the most part of any given work. And the work's success is frequently in inverse ratio to the amount of expository criticism to be found therein.

II

All of which brings us to an American who is writing now—who has made considerable din in contemporary literature, whose voice is even now heard in the land. John Steinbeck. He is not

one crying in the wilderness although one fears that there are many groups who wish that he were.

Steinbeck started, innocuously enough, with two novels which did not even ripple the pond of American criticism. One, based on the life and exploits of the buccaneer Sir Harry Morgan, reminds the reader of De Foe's COLONEL JACQUES without the older's sympathy with his protagonist's opportunism and bourgeois morality. Steinbeck's Morgan is unloving, unlovable and unloved—like O'Neill's Marco Polo in some ways. And this unsympathetic, in some places excoriating, treatment of middle-class morality and ideals, is the only link between proletarian writing and this early effort. THE CUP OF GOLD died almost stillborn like Crane's MAGGIE, and like it was republished only after the author's success. To A GOD UNKNOWN, the other early novel, is in some ways of foretaste of the later Steinbeck—what with its California setting, the metaphysics of its mythos, the supernatural qualities of its protagonist. It is, in part at least, allegorical; the allegory is of the land and parallels older myths personified in the Indian scenes.

All this is a far cry from proletarian literature, from propaganda writing in general and the economic novel, but the early work, especially To A GOD UNKNOWN, is important, one feels, because it suggests an approach and foreshadows a treatment.

The success novels—TORTILLA FLAT and OF MICE AND MEN (the latter in play as well as novelette form)—deal with California also. Steinbeck was shocked at the reception accorded the former, which seems to have been gathered to the bosoms of the socially indignant (it is *not* a propaganda novel), the searchers for the picturesque, and lovers of the "off colour". Steinbeck knew his characters, the *paisanos*, and loved them; he wrote of them with understanding and affection—and was shocked by what faddists did to his work, as well as what critics said of it. OF MICE AND MEN, on the other hand, proved readily understandable to the reading and theatre publics and resulted in the author's elevation to a Writer of Importance. It, too, concerns Steinbeck's California—and if to the socially-conscious it is a study of proletarian conditions and, especially in the person of the Negro, of minority problems, to almost everyone else it is simply a swift moving

tale of psychopathic phenomena (*SANCTUARY* was a success, too), of horror and sudden deaths, of man's love for man.

Then came the prelude to the wide social study—in the form of a novel concerning a strike, *IN DUBIOUS BATTLE*. Conservatives and radicals alike called the author names, insisted that his treatment was unfair, untrue—was intended to whitewash Communism on the one hand and to paint it at its very worst on the other. The novel presents a situation only too frequent in California. Unfortunately for the enthusiasts among his readers, Steinbeck is aware of certain shortcomings—shortcomings from the humanitarian standpoint, that is—on both sides. Here Labor is as unscrupulous as Capital—the strike settles nothing and proves little. True, it teaches the workers to organize, it shows them their potential of power. Yet labor loses, one protagonist is murdered and his co-worker uses the dead body as a symbol and a slogan. The reader's delicacies, his humanitarian sympathies, are outraged; he is left with the taste of blood and gall in his mouth. But one feels that for the author this novel presents a Californian situation, handled on both sides as it is in California, and that the moral, if any, is that Californians could, and should, find a more satisfactory answer to this ever-present problem. This is, one is sure of it despite the author's objectivity, not a study of labor movements in the abstract, of proletarian universals, but of a specific sore spot in one particular place.

Two other works must be considered here. First is *PASTURES OF HEAVEN*, which is built, like William March's excellent war novel *COMPANY K*, out of short stories. The technique is akin to that employed in *TORTILLA FLAT*, but the continuity is provided by geographical location—a valley in California—rather than by the reoccurrence of principles, as was true in the earlier work. The stories show considerable range of material and attitude, but the predominant feature is the life of typical California farmers in a California valley.

The other item is the pamphlet republication, called *THEIR BLOOD IS STRONG*, of a series of newspaper articles concerning the itinerant laborers known as Okies. It is, of course, meant to arouse sympathy in California for her problem children, the harvest nomads. The results sought are two-fold—establishment of decent camps, and state restraint on what the author clearly

feels to be the rapacity of certain groups who are held responsible for: first, the presence of the Okies; second, the problems which these migrants now face. The solution lies in the hands of the state; she must clean up this mess, eradicate this blot. It is a Californian problem which must be solved by Californians.

THE LONG VALLEY, a collection of short stories and sketches, is also Californian. Only one or two of the parts might be set elsewhere. What critics agree to be the best parts of the book—"The Red Pony" and "The Leader of the People"—are necessarily of the far West, and treat the growth and ideology of a boy whose family own and operate a ranch there. "The Vigilante" and "The Raid" hark back, in subject matter at least to the type of material found in IN DUBIOUS BATTLE. "Breakfast" might be taken *verbatim* from THE GRAPES OF WRATH, as "The Murder and Johnny Bear" might well come from PASTURES OF HEAVEN. Others of the stories concern California people, and bring out a feature predominant in TO A GOD UNKNOWN and PASTURES OF HEAVEN—the author's love and sympathy for, as well as identity with, the earthy people of his own state.

In time the interest shown in THEIR BLOOD IS STRONG gave birth to Steinbeck's most ambitious novel so far, THE GRAPES OF WRATH. According to the critics, this is an example of that amorphous and incongruous genre, the prose epic. It is, as a matter of fact, the chronicle of an Okie family's westing trek. How seriously the author intends it to be taken as a documentary novel, a record in fiction, appears from the fact that fifteen of the thirty chapters (only a sixth of the book by actual page count, however) are intermediary, or expository, and have no direct relationship with the plot concerning the Joads themselves.

Roughly, the novel falls into three parts: The Departure, The Trip, and The New Home. It begins with a dust storm in Oklahoma and ends with a California flood. The Joads cover a great dead of ground—geographically, emotionally, and economically. They appear early in the book as good stock for settlers—Americans of long standing; they are hardworking and frugal, tough and courageous. The System (specifically, the Banks) combines with agricultural conditions to drive them West. These people can, we feel, make a go of it if given any opportunities whatever.


The Westward movement is drawn in all its length and breath.

The reader follows these latter-day pioneers mile by weary mile, facing their social problems, evolving their emergency code of ethics, marvelling—as the author frequently does—at their stamina, their unfailing courage, their vast kindness. This is the crucible in which their qualities are fused. Good stock for California.

The third, and last, section treats the end of the road. Deluded by advertisements for workers, driven by screaming necessity, the Okies come face-to-face with the California agricultural system at last. Here, in the Promised Land, they meet hatred, scorn, and above all fear. Shunted from job to job, from county to county; kept on the move lest they organize or try to settle, they live in filth, they are shamelessly exploited. Here in the Land of Plenty they starve, are foully housed, go insufficiently clothed. Something is wrong here, radically wrong. The dazed Okies hurry from will-o-the-wisp job to mirage job, picking up a dollar or two here and there during harvest time. Sometimes they can even eat meat, buy milk for the babies; but usually this is impossible. Once they enjoy a breathing spell in a government camp and here, says Steinbeck, is a solution, a practical solution. (He had presented it earlier, in *THEIR BLOOD IS STRONG*.) But they must move on.

The Joad family disintegrates—only father, mother, Rosasharn and the youngsters are left. Then comes the season of no crops, the season of rains. Washed out of their temporary quarters, they seek shelter in a barn, where Rosasharn gives of her breast milk to a dying man. This, Steinbeck seems to say, shows the indomitable courage, the unquenchable humanity of the Okies. Outside the barn, a new crop is breaking the ground. Inside, a dying man is being revitalized by the mother-spirit. Here are hope and Spring after the long winter. The grapes of wrath—sown in Oklahoma, budded on the westward journey, and ripened in California—need stamping out. This must be done with improved living conditions, with a chance to settle down.

THE GRAPES OF WRATH crosses the State Line, it is true. Yet the crossing is westward, into the State from without. There comes a vast influx of new blood, of potentially valuable citizens. Help these new-comers to find a home, let them live as human beings, as worthy citizens of a state to which God has been good, and in time they will be a blessing where now they seem a curse. They



will be our friends who are now our enemies. On these we may build solidly, they are strong oak for the building. This is the theme of the novel, not "Workers of the World, Unite"! This problem is a State problem, to be faced and eventually solved by the citizens of the State. The Okie is not adrift amid the rapids of a vaguely defined Capitalist system. The solution is not revolution, but love and understanding. The community mind must solve a community problem. The threat of radical organization is there—but it is a threat, not a promise. Steinbeck, here as earlier, is not a doctrinaire, but a Californian urging other Californians to solve a problem, the importance and magnitude of which has not, heretofore, been made apparent to them. This is his work, his gift—in terms of the State.

Truly, I doubt that Steinbeck is a proletarian writer, just as I doubt that London was, or the others whom I have mentioned. Further, I cannot help feeling that the proletarian novelist gives to fortune hostages which many artists are unwilling to give—and rightly so, from their standpoint. I also think that some criteria of proletarian writing are not sufficiently regarded by critics who are over-free with the term. In any treatment of such writing, or of any artist as possible professor or precursor of the type, the critic should begin with a clear statement of what he feels to be the *sine qua non* of the genre. Further, he should apply these criteria to other writers, and evaluate them according to these standards.

by Louis T. More

SHELBURNE REVISITED

AN INTIMATE GLIMPSE OF PAUL ELMER MORE

IT is forty years since that two Youths tried the experiment whether serenity of mind, in a mad world, could be achieved by a period of solitude. The elder brother persisted in his intention for two full years; the younger, because of other obligations, for two summers only.

The village of Shelburne, New Hampshire, is situated in the valley of the Androskoggin River, celebrated by the pen of Hawthorne. Across the river, lies the fertile Shelburne Farm, owned by Mr. Philbrook, who, to increase his income, had lodged near his house a colony of summer guests. These were mostly from Harvard, and of so bluestocking and so rarefied an atmosphere that once a travelling salesman timidly enquired of the station master whether he could have accommodation at the farm for the night. After regarding him critically, the answer was: "Be ye college bred?"

A mile and a half from the farm, on a dusty country road, there stood a tiny red hut, empty then, but recently the shelter of a numerous Canadian family. To it, the Elder transported his household goods, mostly his books, and necessities borrowed from Mr. Philbrook. Over the entrance door, in black letters, he painted inscriptions in Sanskrit which proclaimed the necessity of withdrawal from the world and from the distractions of women. As his only companion he had "Raj", a Great and Noble Dane.

What were the influences of the lonely and bitter snow-bound winters on the Elder can be understood by him who cares to read, for they are told in many *SHELBURNE ESSAYS*. But the summers passed together have been remembered so fondly that they were not often mentioned to others. The mornings were passed in steady work; dinners at the Farm, afternoons in naps and long walks; evenings in reading and talking, or in an occasional visit

to the colony. There was such an intimacy of the two men and the dog that little else was needed.

During the afternoons of the second summer, it must be confessed, there was a minor distraction caused by the appearance of two charming girls at the Farm, whose parents had unexpectedly chosen the simple life for the season, rather than Narragansett or Newport, to economise for the approaching and expensive *début* of the younger sister. They, and their mother, who was not built for exercise, even trudged the hot and dusty road to have tea in the cabin; drawn by that curious and envious feminine scepticism that bachelors can keep a decorous house; while they, poor devils, spent a week's income on a sybaritic tea. The girls unchaperoned in such an innocent atmosphere, gave romance to many strolls through the ancient forest which stretched behind the cabin. These walks ended in a charming spot, called the bowls and pitchers, where a small brook cascading on granite boulders had, through the ages, rolled them round and round, till they made deep bowls in the softer rock on which they had rested.

This untouched forest, thus intimately entering their lives, produced an unexpected result and aroused a certain sympathy with the pioneers who wantonly destroyed the wilderness. Instead of peacefulness in its superficial aspect of quiet beauty, the tangled growth aroused a feeling of fear and hostility as a scene of unceasing struggle, and of a blind warfare for mere existence. Even the vegetation seemed animated by a ruthless and fierce will to exist and to propagate its kind; and all the little animals ran furtively by as if in deadly peril. Only once did they observe the calm assurance and serenity which should be the fruit of an innocent and godly life,—once, in the open path, with tails boldly erect and conspicuous with their bands of black and white as a warning to all enemies, a female skunk and her six kittens in single file placidly took their afternoon stroll.

But the most memorable time was in the cool of the evening when, satisfied with the day's study and exercise, the Youths rested on the stoop of the hut, their pipes tasting sweet and comfortable; and great Raj sat at their knees, looking up into the face of his master with infinite love and devotion, yet with the dumb and perplexed wonder of the dog at the mysterious actions of his god.

At times as they sat there, a coach, loaded with fashionable people from a summer resort up the valley, came by on its way to far-off cities. Usually, it whirled by in a cloud of dust; occasionally it stopped, for the rumour of the Hermit had somewhat spread, so that the passengers might stare at the mystic writing above the door, at the noble dog, and at the two men on the stoop; or some would descend to ask for a draught of cool water from our well nearby.

While the sun set and filled the valley with pictured glory, they silently and reverently watched the hills in solitude, beyond the peaceful meadows and the glancing river. Often, from the top of each hill, there floated a little white cloud, always blown away by the breeze but always fixed in its position. Long ago, in classic Greece, the people saw just such clouds and, with their simpler faith, they thought each one veiled a god or goddess come from Olympus to watch the habits of men. Whether that, or our guess as to the equally mysterious causes of Nature, be true, the Youths could never be sure.

II

Last summer after so many years, I with my daughter made a pilgrimage to Shelburne from the shores of Lake Champlain. When our motor stopped at the Philbrook Farm, I could scarcely recognise the scene of my brother's adventure. The simple farmhouse had been enlarged into an imposing building, glistening in its spotless white paint. Before it stretched broad terraces, beautifully kept and dotted with gay flower beds. In the centre, a flag floated from a tall staff; behind the house, alone unchanged stood the dark forest of pine and spruce. A lady met us at the door and, to our enquiry for a lodging for the night, answered with surprise that Philbrook's was not accustomed to accept transients without notice. My name aroused no interest; but the mention that I was the brother of the Hermit brought instant recognition and a joyous welcome. They gave to us their own suite of rooms. The lady was the wife of the little Philbrook boy we once had romped with; the older son had been killed in the war; and Mr. Philbrook, himself still strong and alert, had the day before celebrated his eightieth birthday.

After a short rest and talk, my daughter and I set out to find

the little red cabin. On the road, now smooth and metalled, and at a distance vaguely in accord with my memory, we saw a smallish building; red to be sure, but larger, neater and evidently the cottage of a summer visitor. When we found the tenants were not at home, we sat on the porch, where formerly had been the stoop. I gradually reconstructed the old familiar scene. Only one aspect continued to puzzle and to confuse me. Where once I had looked over open meadows to the river and the hills beyond, my gaze was now blanked by a grove of great pine trees; and to the left, on a knoll, where we had often listened to the whispers of a thicket of small birches, I saw but two or three patriarchs, dumb and haggard with old age. Suddenly, as though by a blow, the shock of the years, past and gone, swept over me:

Eheu, fugaces, Postume, Postume,
labunter anni.

How swift the years, Oh, Posthumus, Posthumus,
have drifted past us.

After dinner, in the parlor, Mr. Philbrook and I recalled the shadows of the past. When the cabin had been rebuilt for its new tenant, he had removed the boards bearing the Sanscrit inscription and stored them in his barn; but they had been destroyed in a fire. Suddenly, I pointed with my pipe to a pair of blue pottery jars on the mantel-piece. Just such as they used to be given to smokers of Yale Mixture by the Manufacturers, and they bore the legend: May your troubles end in smoke. That one with the lid, I exclaimed, was surely mine; and that one was my brother's, for I remember he broke the cover to his jar. "Yes," mused the old man, "they have stood there forty years, a reminder to me of a great experience, and of a dear friend."

by George A. Scarbrough

EXPERIENCE

There in the sway-backed bull barn I came face
To face with death and didn't seem to care:
Caught in the desperate closeness of that place,
I smiled at death and never turned a hair.
Leaning against the logs, I waited, eyeing
The big black bull, watching him paw the soft,
Dark stable earth, seeing my pitchfork lying
Just out of reach above me in the loft.
Slowly, he turned from me and sidled out,
His nostrils loud with steaming, angry breath;
I pushed the door to slowly, in a stout
Voice told myself, "I'm not afraid of death!"
But when I'd climbed the ladder and come down
Outside again, I knelt and kissed the ground.

FARMER

He gutted himself each summer in his crop,
Growing so thin and lean he had to stand
Twice in a place to make his shadow drop
Its lengthy, narrow lines across the land.
His cheeks were stubbled hollows, and his eyes,
Sweat-stung and fierce, were wild things in his face:
And yet he held a man works till he dies,
And knew no little pride to keep his place.
"I know where I belong," he used to say,
Fixing his mouth to squirt tobacco juice
Against the mule's rump, "so I guess I'll stay
Here on the land where I'm a little use."
He sweated mightily to earn his bread
And when he died I said, "A man is dead."

CEDARS

Strange how a cedar loves the old fence-row
A farmer has forgot, or doesn't care
What grows between the posts: tall cedars know,
Somehow, it's safe to spread their darkness there.
Roots are not long in running where the soil
Is quiet, and seeds are instant things to sprout:
So many a farmer beds him from his toil
And wakes to find dark cedars all about.
I've seen them take a dozen farms or so,
When families moved away or fathers died;
And where they came from, suddenly, to grow
So tall and dark, I never could decide.
Some say the birds are culprits, some say "Elves!"
I like to think they do it all themselves.

RETRACTION

Corn grew in rows as always and the hay
Was going in by wagon-loads from fields
That ran the hills in their accustomed way:
The neighbors talked as usual of the yields
Of corn and hay compared to other years,
Telling the self-same jokes, as men will do
In similar circumstances, while my ears
Were hating things that they were never through
With jawing back and forth across the bend
Of knotted backs. And under all their tossing
The sweaty mirth ran on without an end.
And I, their boss, was sick of any bossing.
I passed the hay up silently and fast,
Wondering how long my sanity would last.

FATHER

My father's such a careful farmer: He
Can never let a weed grow in his corn.
He keeps us hoeing, speaking scornfully
Of neighbors whose weed-patches are a thorn
Of anger in the side of his good farming;
He loves a clean row, and we humor him,
Knowing the work's outweighed by his wild storming—
He owns few words, but how he uses them!
Not that his tongue is long as mine is long,
Nor even that he holds himself a bit
Above his neighbors, though he has the strong
Man's scorn of those who peter out and sit
In shade of fence-rows, while their crop grows high
With weeds and nettles and the corn plants die.

MOTHER

She walked down long, hot, dusty rows of that
Wild summertime and somehow made a song
Of awful toil, and I from where I sat
In shade of fence-rows, knew that she was strong
With strength of many women, and I thought,
As weaklings do, of days to come when I,
Grown tall and manly, with a living bought,
Could see my mother lay her drudgery by.
But still she drags her weary feet, like lead,
Across thin upland fields, and I beside,
The weaker yet, the last mouth to be fed,
Have wished a thousand times that I had died
That weary summer when I was but nine
And all her life had not been sold for mine.

DARK HESTER

I

She slaved to send her girl out to the town
Beyond the hills where high school kept its door
Open to all: She picked up work around
The neighborhood, but most of us were poor
As this dark woman was and gave her pay
In meat and meal, a can of homemade kraut
To carry home when she had worked a day
At stripping cane or washing. She was stout
In body and in mind: she had to be
To work her gaunt, bent fingers to the bone
For four long years to set her Hester free
Of drudgery such as she had always known.
When others laughed, or called her "That old fool!"
She told herself she had a girl in school.

II

For four long years. . . Now Hester journeys home
To these familiar hills each month and walks
Among us with her mother, smiling some
To see the way we listen when she talks.
So tall and dark and lovely is she now,
She *can't* remember when she hadn't bread
And went to school for days without, or how
Her mother slaved when all but hope was dead.
She speaks so gently to us who took care
To say in scorn, "No matter how he flies,
A crow is just as black!" but always there
Is something fiercely proud in her dark eyes.
Her mother walks beside her, proud and shy,
Her bony shoulders giving silk the lie.

SASSAFRAS MAN

I didn't want the man to see the pity in my eyes,
For I was very, very young and not so very wise,
And he *was* wise, this bent old man, who limped upon my street.
A-selling yellow roots to buy himself a bite to eat.

He held a bundle in his hands and softly called his wares
And smiled a little to himself to see the people's stares;
He didn't seem to mind a bit the way they passed him, though
He hadn't made a single sale. I stopped and said, "Hello!"

In such a hearty tone he turned and looked into my face,
As if he thought I might be mad, or new about the place
At least. "Hello," he said to me, and wiped his old man's cheek
Upon his ragged sleeve and stood awhile for me to speak.

I didn't say so many words, for words were hard to say,
But bought his entire stock of roots and hurried on my way,
Because I told him how I liked a tea I'd never tasted,
And there was pity in his eyes, and what I'd bought was wasted!

by John W. Dodds

THACKERAY IN THE VICTORIAN FRAME

BY those who are fond of labels Thackeray has often been bracketed as a "typical Victorian". Nevertheless any attempt neatly to pigeonhole Thackeray in particular or the nineteenth century in general usually breaks down under the multiplicity of motive that it encounters. Looking back on the age from this distance we can see where it went and even how it got there, but to attempt to trace its movements is to realize that in a sense it arrived in spite of itself, crab-like. Energy it had, and strenuousness, and a vast kinetic power which, harnessed to a fundamental stability, helped it to build a new social order while the old one was dissolving around it. But any artist can paint his own picture of the age. Throw the light from one side and you have a portrait of complete assurance—a nation vital, dogmatic, asserting with a Macaulayan forthrightness that this is undoubtedly the best of all possible times and England certainly the best of all possible countries. Throw the light from the other side and you see doubt and indignation and the depths of spiritual despair in an age hot for certainties but unable to reconcile its intelligence with its belief. It was, nevertheless, a time when things were getting themselves done with an appalling swiftness and intensity. However glorious the life may or may not have been, the hour was crowded with accomplishment. In this life Thackeray shared fully, and to know his mind it is of some importance to see how much and how little of a Victorian he was.

To begin with, there were areas of human experience carefully tilled by contemporary novelists to which he seemed a complete stranger. Never did he join the philanthropic school and break his lance against the darker social abuses of the day. With such abuses, in the backwash of the Industrial Revolution, English society was of course riddled. Somehow the Victorians had to reconcile their faith in Progress with the existence of the almost incredible degradation of masses of people crowded into the new indus-

trial centers, living like animals in dark filthy cellars without hope of God in the world, sending, in order that they might continue to exist, their young children into the mines and to the looms; and when released at last by death, given an uncertain burial in an overcrowded cemetery. Industrial science, the hope of Progress, had created its own social conditions as it grew and had developed so fast that a confused society had not been able to make man's welfare keep pace with the machine. Indeed society has not yet caught up with the machine, and for a century the race has been much like that of the dog's chasing the mechanical rabbit around the track: there remains always a steady perceptible gap between aspiration and achievement. But the gap in the early nineteenth century was much wider, and the Victorians have left few more inspiring records than their efforts during the 'thirties and 'forties, through Parliamentary investigation, fearless report, and subsequent legislation, to leash the industrial monster. The vast machinery of philanthropy was selfish, perhaps, insofar as it was operating under fear of imminent social collapse (the Chartist rumblings were loud and ominous) but behind much of it was an honest concern for the welfare of the masses. Macaulay himself came to see that a measure of state control was not incompatible with civil freedom and indeed might be necessary, if the social order was to endure.

To name the novelists who entered the arena is almost to call the roll of Victorian writers. Disraeli, looking at "The Two Nations", rich and poor, contrasting the squalor and suffering of the working classes with the wealth and luxury of their employers; Mrs. Gaskell (*Mary Barton*), blocking in, with dark colors, the wretched life of the underprivileged; Charles Kingsley (*Alton Locke; Yeast*), revealing the degradation of industrial and agricultural laborers; Charles Reade (*It Is Never Too Late to Mend*), baring the abuses of the convict system; Wilkie Collins (*No Name; Man and Wife*) tilting on behalf of illegitimate children and against the Scotch marriage laws; Charles Dickens, angry when he is not being sentimental or funny, hitting official heads, with a fine and forceful indignation, wherever he sees them—in debtors' prisons, boys' schools, or the law courts; even Bulwer, giving a factitious importance to *Eugene Aram* and *Paul Clifford* by de-

claring a sociological, reforming purpose in his studies of crime. The Victorian novel drew its breath in the atmosphere of reform; but Thackeray in his novels passed it by, or touched it very lightly.

That is not the same as saying what some critics have believed, that Thackeray was insensitive to suffering. He did not, it is true, believe much in committees, but his purse was always open to private need. The memoirs of the time are full of stories of his tactful generosity. Nor was he without social conscience. He crusaded against flogging in the army and wrote on several occasions against the degrading spectacle of public executions and even against capital punishment. He has commented, too, on the vast gulf between the rich and the poor, and on the load of suffering of which most of us live in ignorance. But he felt, rightly enough, that his talent called him in a different direction and that he had best leave to other hands the war against human misery.

Although Thackeray's sympathies, then, were with reform, he ignored it in his novels. Still less does he display any interest in the ferment of religious and philosophical and scientific ideas which were working on the complacency of nineteenth century inherited doctrine. Lyell's *Principles of Geology* in 1830-33 and Robert Chambers's *Vestiges of Creation* in 1844 had aroused great excitement in intellectual circles, making the way clear for Darwin. All these including the *Origin of Species* fell within the range of Thackeray's working life, but nowhere in his published works or in his letters does one find reference to them. His old college-mate Tennyson, distressed like many of his fellows over the necessity of reconciling the new revelation with the old, seemed to answer all doubts with *In Memoriam*. Matthew Arnold, wandering perplexed between his two worlds, refers in 1853 to "the bewildering confusions of our times". But Thackeray was insulated from disturbing speculation by two related attitudes of mind: a general lack of interest in metaphysical shadowboxing and a simple faith which, sufficiently individual and unorthodox to distress his pious mother, yet gave him a quiet spiritual poise, within the circle of which all religious doubts could be laid at rest.

II

There has been a general impression, supported by Lady Ritch-

ie in the "Biographical Introductions" to her edition of the *Works*, that Thackeray was not much interested in politics. It is true that the novels do not touch on political themes, and his youthful spree of campaigning for Charles Buller and Reform in 1832, as well as his amusing and quixotic stand for Parliament in 1857 do not in themselves indicate any serious preoccupation with practical politics. Nevertheless his letters and more particularly his anonymous contributions to *Punch* show an active concern with political questions of the day.

In 1832 he went into Liskeard in Cornwall to help Buller in his campaign for election to Parliament. He writes to his mother and to FitzGerald with great gusto about his experiences—writing addresses, canvassing farmers, dining with attorneys. One day he rides for twelve hours' canvassing—and finds himself somewhat stiff the next day. At Liskeard, before the election, he discovers the town in an uproar and makes a triumphant entry with Buller amid waving flags and saluting guns. For the cause of Liberalism he offers himself freely on the altar of dances and teas, all the while pledging Buller to reforms in politics and religion, reforms of which Thackeray admitted he knew nothing himself. It was all very gay and exciting and not at all profound. On May 9th he wrote: "The Ministers, the Reform Bill, and the country gone to the devil." Commons "will soon . . . be a house of delegates. . . . Bought a big stick wherewith to resist all parties in case of an attack."

Thackeray turned twenty-one that summer.

He remained always a liberal in politics, with Radical sympathies, striking out indignantly against oppression of all kinds. His friend Buller, the friend too of Grote and John Stuart Mill, was one of the younger Philosophic Radicals. As late as 1840 Thackeray writes to his mother about the "two humbugs", the "rascally Whigs and Tories". But "I'm not a Chartist, only a Republican. I would like to see all men equal, and this bloated aristocracy blasted to the wings of all the winds. It has been good and useful up to the present time, nay, for a little time longer, perhaps—just up to the minute when the great lion shall shake his mane and scatter all these absurd insects out of it. . . . I see how in every point of morals the aristocracy is cursing the country.

Oh for a few enlightened Republicans, men to say their say honestly, and dare to do and say the truth."¹ In *Going to See a Man Hanged* (*Fraser's*, August, 1840) he digresses into what he calls "an unconscionable Republican tirade". "Populus" has been growing in wisdom, he says, "and there are ten million of him, to whom we give—exactly nothing." He favored the ballot and universal suffrage (in 1848 he wrote an open letter in *Punch* to Joseph Hume approving his principles) but frowned on the Chartists with their threats of force; the bigotry "of the present Chartists leaders is greater than the bigotry we suffer under." The extreme radical, he believed, was the Conservative's best friend.

He was strong for the repeal of the Corn Laws, caring not which party abolished them. He contributed two drawings to the *Anti-Corn Law Circular*, and when Peel and the Tories in 1845 adopted the Whig policies of Russell, Thackeray wrote a poem in *Punch* to show his pleasure over the measures adopted—no matter who the agents may be:

I'm thankful that the stream at last is free;
Bobby or Johnny what's the odds to me?

About a year later² he laughs at the Whigs for claiming that they were the originators of all progressive legislation. To be a Whig you must not only believe in Reforms, but must believe that Whigs must be in office. "If the people will have reforms, why of course you can't help it; but remember, the Whigs are to have the credit." When Peel left office in June, 1846, having sacrificed his administration to see the Corn Laws passed, Thackeray wrote a touching tribute in *Punch*. He indicates that *Punch* and Peel have had their differences, but that *Punch* honors "dear old Peel". He had been "an upholder of shams and a pompous declaimer of humbugs". But he repents and we take him into our arms and forgive all.³

Thackeray is for the most part a supporter of policies rather than of parties or even of men. Brougham he disapproved of as a political adventurer, and in an early *Review of Lord Brougham's Speeches*, he sees Brougham as the type of his times: "Publicity

¹Biographical introduction to *Barry Lyndon*.

²"Are There Any Whig Snobs?" July, 1846.

³"On Conservative or Country Party Snobs," July, 1846.

is our life—self-aggrandizement, slavish to public opinion, thinking by majorities...our life is a faction..." A stormy, almost Carlylean indictment of contemporary selfishness. All the young men of the highest classes, he complains, are brought up, not educated in principles, but to take sides to which they are faithful. "The poor mob!—it has natural feelings and sympathies, and cannot as yet emulate the baseness of its betters." He approved of Macaulay as a consistent statesman and liberal and praised him for the "generous and kindly system" which "characterizes his political as well as his literary career... Allied with a great party, he always bore himself above it."⁴

One of Thackeray's early experiences in political writing was in connection with the ill-fated *Constitutional and Public Ledger*, launched in September, 1836, and carrying with it when it sank nine months later the investment of Thackeray's step-father and doubtless too what remained of Thackeray's own patrimony. Thackeray had served as Paris Correspondent, on the strength of which appointment, with a salary of £400 a year, he married. The *Constitutional* enlisted the support of Charles Buller and Sir William Molesworth and was openly Radical in politics. For some six months Thackeray wrote political news-letters from Paris, signed "T. T.", showing a comprehensive knowledge of contemporary French politics and a strong disapproval of the régime of Louis Philippe.⁵

Although, as Lady Ritchie has indicated, Thackeray's left-wing liberalism doubtless gave offense sometimes to female friends of the family, it was no pose with him but a part of his deep belief that the government owed to the welfare of the people a debt that it had not been paying. He was perfectly willing to take pot-shots at either side, Whig or Tory, if it seemed to him to be making political capital of human suffering. Nor did his patriotism

⁴*The Pictorial Times*, April 1, 1843.

⁵Though Thackeray could not have known it, the *Constitutional* goaded the thin-skinned Leopold, King of the Belgians, into one of his complaining outbursts. He wrote to his niece, Queen Victoria, on Nov. 18, 1838: "An infamous Radical or Tory-Radical paper, the *Constitutional*, seems determined to run down the Coburg family. I don't understand the meaning of it; the only happiness poor Charlotte knew was during her short wedded existence, and there was but one voice on that subject, that we offered a bright prospect to the nation." *Letters of Queen Victoria*, I, 53. Quoted by Edith Sitwell in *Victoria of England*, p. 61.

have in it any taint of jingoism. Thackeray lived into the days when the excitement of Empire began to pulse in English veins and England, typically thrifty, began to see that colonies which had been more or less of a political liability might be made into a national asset. The song of the white man's burden had no charms for Thackeray, and with almost a Shavian pertinence he attacked "Colonial land-grabbing conducted by the British Propaganda under the cloak of religion and missionary work."

Thackeray's campaign at Oxford for a seat in Parliament furnished a fitting climax to his life-long interest in politics. He stood as a Liberal candidate, favoring suffrage reform and vote by ballot. Never did a candidate make a campaign with more gracious generosity and courtesy toward his opponent. When Cardwell, his rival, met Thackeray he said, "May the best man win." "I hope not," said Thackeray. Partly because he aroused opposition with his insistence that public museums should be opened on Sundays, Thackeray was saved for literature by the narrow margin of 67 votes.

To say, therefore, that Thackeray was not interested in the political currents of his time is to do his active and inquiring mind less than justice. It would be foolhardy, however, to declare that his political opinions were always pertinent or ever really profound. In politics he was always more or less the big, beaming, enthusiastic outsider, with liberal instincts and a judgment guided by a warm and sympathetic heart rather than by a clear political head. The best that Thackeray had to say to his generation cut across political lines and went much deeper than party affiliations.

III

In his attitude toward the proper function of the novelist Thackeray is both more and less than a typical Victorian, and here is seen something of his own divided mind. At times he seems to accept whole-heartedly the conventions of his age, and at other times to revolt helplessly against them.

There has been a tremendous amount of tub-thumping by modern Emancipators of Literature (there seems to be less of it cur-

¹M. H. Spielmann's *Hitherto Unidentified Contributions of W. M. Thackeray to PUNCH*, 1899, p. 131.

rently, as we get farther away from the unbuttoned 'twenties) on the prudery of the Victorians. Some of their complaints against the evasions and the respectable hypocrisies of our great grandfathers are justifiable, to be sure, on artistic grounds. Certainly the Victorians did avert their gaze from much of human life, and if their fictional characters seem often two-dimensional the reason is that they are sometimes placed in situations calling for a display of passion which their creators deny them. We have, on human grounds, the necessity, but not the word or deed of accomplishment. Hence the occasional frustrate ghostliness of men and women obviously created with arms and legs like other people, over whose spiritual and emotional crises the author draws the seemingly veil of silence, or worse, misstatement. In this respect Thackeray, who was of no mind to be a martyr on the altar of Victorian Respectability, conformed to the contemporary *mores*. One wonders if, except in a few important instances, the fault was as debilitating to his art as some of our critics would have it.

Nevertheless Thackeray, nurtured though he was on eighteenth century gusto and on the fresh vulgar breezes of *Tom Jones*, did conform, sometimes with obvious sincerity, sometimes with grim reluctance. It is significant that his eulogies of contemporary literary decorum come when he is praising the piety of others, like Dickens or Mr. Punch, and his annoyance at restriction when he is deep in the shaping of one of his own creations. No more than his fellow-novelists did he build the moral atmosphere in which they all lived and wrote, but like his fellows he was shaped by it and responsible to it. He felt deeply the novelist's duty to the public in an age which tested its literature first by its fitness to be read aloud in the home circle. When Dickens chose "Household Words" as the title for his weekly periodical he was nailing aloft the banner of respectability which was the cardinal creed of the Victorian middle classes. And the middle classes, incidentally, were buying the books.

Thackeray was by no means a Victorian unawares. He was a Victorian with roots in the eighteenth century, flowering in an age which preferred not to read about the biological processes by which flowers come into being. That he flowered gracefully, yet with as little intellectual compromise as possible, is to the credit of both

his honesty and his good sense. Yet of Thackeray, as of no other of his contemporaries, one can say that he was born out of his time. His impulse was to drive always behind the peripheries of the social scene and to report truthfully what he found there. He loved Pepys and Montaigne and Fielding and the "wonderful atrocious vulgarity" of *Peregrine Pickle*. In a letter to Masson he declares that the function of the novel is to represent nature, to convey as strongly as possible the sentiment of reality. He laments "the refinements of society which will not allow us to call things by their right names." Again he says, "Fielding's men and Hogarth's are Dickens's and Cruikshank's, drawn with 10 times more skill and force, only the latter humourists dare not talk of what the elder discussed honestly."⁸

Yet in spite of his recognition that contemporary restrictions hampered art, there existed within Thackeray a curious self-contradiction, or perhaps, rather, a wilful effort to set his own artistic conscience at peace. In the same review in which he laments the novelist's lack of freedom he gives a half-hearted approval of Victorian squeamishness and wryly admits that perhaps it is good "to pretend to the virtue of chastity even though we do not possess it", for "the very restraint which the hypocrisy lays on a man is not unapt, in some instances, to profit him."

And so, loving truth, but unable in his generation to pursue it as he would have wished, Thackeray turned easily to the one literary method by which he could satisfy the conventions and at the same time speak something of his mind. The clue to Thackeray's art is not its occasional devastating satire, not its wit, nor its amiable moralizing digressions (Thackeray sometimes thought of himself, curiously, as a "lay preacher"), nor its occasional bursts of sentiment controlled and tempered by a quizzical humor (and nothing is more distinctive in Thackeray than his return upon himself in such moments). The clue to his art is the complete and covering irony through which his whole view of life is filtered. It is an irony softened by a sad and wistful humanity, sharpened at times by an indignation against meanness and cruelty and affectation, but warmed too by a sense of man's hidden nobility

⁸Review of *Jack Sheppard*, *Fraser's*, February, 1840.

⁹Review of Fielding's *Works*, *Times*, September 2, 1840.

and by the gentle melancholy that comes with the ironist's perception of the gulf between man's expansive dreams and his puny successes. Thackeray may at times avert his gaze, but he catches more than he misses. If he does not see life quite whole, he sees very steadily that part of it within the range of his vision.

IV

One of the best measures both of Thackeray's Victorianism and his emancipation is his attitude in his novels toward women; it also helps us to understand the conflict within himself. Toward woman the Victorians were often irritatingly and patronizingly cruel. She was not supposed to know much; indeed she was likely to be a little suspect if she did. She was to be sweet and simple and decorative. The home was to be her boundary, the yearly production of young Victorians her chief occupation, and a shallow innocuous vapidness the measure of her temperament. At least so men liked to think of her; one suspects that she was not always such. Now Thackeray often falls into a conventional and sometimes slightly maudlin adoration of womanhood as an ideal, praising it for the qualities of devotion and tenderness that he honestly admired. "I do respect, admire, and almost worship good women," he wrote. But in his novels his good women always come out a little weakminded and silly. It is not that he makes his less admirable people more interesting than his seeming paragons—he had good Miltonic precedent for that—but rather that he adores his people for the wrong qualities. There is no reason to suspect the sincerity of the tender sentiment with which he enfolds his Helen Pendennisses and Little Sisters and Lady Castlewoods as in a cloud. Nevertheless there appears just here a typical and completely Thackerayan trait. The adoration is always in the *comment* upon the characters, and is not implicit in the materials of the story itself. What his people do and say often contradicts the comment. Within Thackeray there was some relentless urge which drove him as creator to a complete honesty of characterization while at the same time as commentator he tried to temper the wind to the shorn lamb. Of the two, the artist impresses us with the incisive accuracy of his portraits; the philosopher, with the curious uncertainty of his judgment.

The realist in Thackeray, however, was for the most part dominant, and against his occasional ecstatic perorations there might be set a rather sizable anthology of cool and penetrating comment and characterization of the sort which angered Mrs. Jameson and Harriet Martineau and caused Charlotte Brontë (after she had recovered from her first idealization of Thackeray as a sort of Hebrew prophet come to puncture universal pretension) to complain that he was "unjust to women—quite unjust." Amelia Sedley, for example, modeled as she was, according to Thackeray's own affectionate statement, from his mother, his wife, and Mrs. Brookfield, is essentially a fatuous person, weak and silly. He admitted to his mother that Amelia was selfish. In another letter he says that Dobbin is "a fool for his pains" and "has married a silly little thing."

One always remembers, too, his gallery of almost unbearably real harridans of whom the Campaigner in *The Newcomes* is the apotheosis—cruel, selfish, mean, bitter, encased in an impregnable armor of self-righteousness, yet scattering pain and dismay wherever they go. In one place he asserts that women "cultivate duplicity", that they are usually jealous of women prettier than themselves, that "women deceive more than men, having more to hide." He cries out, too, against the piffling fancy-work employments of women, "who live a dull life of trifles because that is what they are disposed to do," and declares his liking for clever women: the world has made a set against them and they haven't had fair play.⁹ Here again, then, Thackeray is the Victorian-anti-Victorian, a strange blend of an emotional capacity to reverence womanhood as an ideal and an unerring precision of observation which made him look beneath the appearance for the reality.

Like the rest of his generation, Thackeray was much concerned with conduct, but in its broader sense. No one ever turned a keener or a more calculating eye upon the social grotesqueries of his time. Victorian society presented peculiar opportunities to the anatomist of snobbishness. In spite of the fact that the Victorians were full of an ingenuous self-satisfaction and were more than half inclined to believe that the Victorian Englishman was

⁹*Men's Wives: The Ravenswing*, biog. ed. p. 226.

¹⁰*Sketches and Travels in London*, biog. ed. p. 308.

God's most satisfying special creation, it was in many ways, as I have indicated, an uncertain society, throwing up bulwarks of optimism against a secret quivering doubt and uncertainty. The social order which had seemed so stable in the eighteenth century was now fluid and shifting. The old aristocracy, still socially dominant, had watched the balance of power swing from the land to the new industrial cities and had seen the emergence of a new plutocracy. As yet this moneyed middle-class, bearing the stigma of its bourgeois origin, was crude and uneasy. It had no tradition, no social inheritance, and so it yearned and panted after the marks of gentility of which the landed aristocracy had been in exclusive possession. In a shifting society anything might happen; the gates of the Elect might open even to the Merchant Prince and his wife. Not infrequently they did open, and if titles were not actually purchased, at least convenient alliances were made between the sons of birth and the daughters of wealth. Many of those who could get only the narrowest foothold on the social ladder strove valiantly to acquire the veneer of gentility. There is something a trifle pathetic as well as something hard and unlovely about this scramble toward the social appurtenances of Success—this admission of inferiority and the desperate effort to draw somehow a cloth of gold about Respectability. But one of its chief by-products was to make snobbery for a time an endemic national disease. Thackeray was not the first to isolate the virus, but he was its predestined purge; the egregious Englishman, at home or abroad, was never safe from his pen. In a hundred places he ferreted them out and all sorts of egotistical dullards had to run for shelter. Thus in the *Book of Snobs*, despite the definitely restricted theme, Thackeray succeeds in giving a great deal of vivacious social criticism. Certainly insolence and conceit and crawling flattery have never been more carefully dissected.

The idea of the Englishman as God's Elect stirred Thackeray to no enthusiasm. Like most Englishmen Thackeray suffered from an uneasy feeling that the French hated the English and that, in addition, most Frenchmen were the natural enemies of that code of morals which it was the honor of every faithful Britisher to uphold. Nevertheless, Thackeray admitted with typical candor that there was no particular reason why the French should

not hate the English. He devotes many pages, here and there, to a scathing analysis of the provincialities of Englishmen abroad—their insolent assumption of superiority, their insistence upon carrying their nation with them wherever they go and upon buying Harvey's Sauce and Morison's Pills in every port, their general surly, peevish insularity.

Thackeray's dominant critical trait is his ability to stand outside the social scene and view it with calm objectivity, quite without rancor and maintaining that delicate poise which permitted an infiltration of pity and an analgesic humor. Therefore in spite of his occasional confusions of heart and head and in spite of his ability to have a very good time in the midst of a society the limitations of which he saw so clearly, it is incorrect to call him, as Frank Swinnerton does, "the most typically Victorian novelist of them all." Thackeray would not have written as he did, of course, in any other century, and he stayed, a bit restively, within the *convenances* of his time. Yet the measure of his creative intellect is to no small extent the distance that it is separated from all that was "typically Victorian". It narrowed his range. It made him infinitely less popular than the more "typical" Dickens. But it will always keep for him an audience fit, and not too few.

by Dwight Durling

ANTINOMIES

Tranced is the brain, a dial's shadow gliding
To its eventual darkness, stealing on,
To one scant circle bound; the mind's bright pawn
In yesterday, tomorrow, or out of time
To atmosphere of essences withdrawn—

Infinitesimal brain, a point of space;
The mind upreaching to the farthest stars
Girdling the earth,—outspread, another sky—
Darter and piercer, swifter than light to fly
At once to the goal with instantaneous dawn—

The brain aloft upon the neural vine,
Wafted upon its slender stem; the mind
Rootless, unresting, roofless as the wind,
Even in dungeoned darkness unconfined,
Teiresias-formed to fathom separate kind
And incompatible delights—

the brain

Annihilated in the outer spaces
Of air, an alien, rejected of fire and flood;
Adventurous wraith, unbodied mind, that faces
The monstrous elements in their ancient places,
Wresting their mysteries—still unwithstood
Walks on the waters, vaults the upper air,
Pierces the center, challenges everywhere—

The brain a prey of worms, inheritor
Of the curse, in a trice extinguished, beaten blind;
Great planet-minds that govern mortal night
With gracious influence—till total mind
Absorb all light, ecliptic stars outshone,
Quenched in transcendent dawn of the absolute sun—

Are these antinomies created one?

by J. Atkins Shackford

SIDNEY LANIER AS SOUTHERNER
IN RESPONSE TO CERTAIN CHARGES BY THREE
AGRARIANS

[Continued from July-September, 1940, issue]

EXAMINING his poetry for his own expression of his views, we will find "The Symphony" a discussion of much of the matter under consideration. We should first point out, perhaps, that Lanier's use of the word Trade, which he consistently capitalizes, is identifiable with the whole system of Nineteenth Century commercialism of both North and South, which we have discussed, and is not coterminous with Northern industrialism. This should be very clear when we recall the context of poems already reviewed, the "Jacquerie", for example, where Trade is held to be responsible for the death of Chivalry and the later peasant uprising in France. It should be obvious that this Trade is not identifiable with Northern industrialism.

"The Symphony" is an orchestra apostrophized; each class of instrument in the orchestra is personified and given a character. The theme, or the subject under discussion among them, is the philosophy which motivated Nineteenth Century commercialism or Trade, and its resultant evils, and each contribution is characteristic of the personality of the instrument. The violins speak first and say:

O Trade! O Trade! would thou wert dead!
The time needs heart—'tis tired of head:

Grant thee, O Trade! thine uttermost hope:
Level red gold with blue sky-slope,
And base it deep as devil's grope:
When all's done, what hast thou won
Of the only sweet that's under the sun?

There I believe we have the remark from the violins that mere materialism, even of the Humanitarians, is no panacea. And the characteristic sob of the violins is an unconditional 'would thou wert dead.' The other stringed instruments take up the same cry, to justify it, and say:

Yea, what avail the endless tale
Of gain by cunning and plus by sale?
Look up the land, look down the land

[Does he not mean 'in North, in South'?]

The poor, the poor, the poor, they stand
Wedge'd by the pressing of Trade's hand
Against an inward-opening door
That pressure tightens evermore.

The strings then go back and review the complaint of the poor which justifies such a cry from the violin:

'Each day, all day' (these poor folks say),
'In the same old year-long, drear-long way,
We weave in the mills and heave in the kilns,
We sieve mine-meshes under the hills,
And thieve much gold from the Devil's bank tills,
To relieve, O God, what manner of ills?—
The beasts, they hunger, and eat, and die;
And so do we, and the world's a sty;
Hush, fellow-swine: why nuzzle and cry?
Swinehood hath no remedy
Say many men, and hasten by,
Clamping the nose and blinking the eye.

• • • • •

And the kilns and the curt-tongued mills say *Go!*
There's plenty that can, if you can't: we know.
Move out, if you think you're underpaid,
The poor are prolific; we're not afraid;
Trade is trade.

To this point the strings have been in full accord with the cry of the violin. There has been protesting but no sign of suggestion of remedy. But now the strings turn to suggesting:

And oh, if men might sometimes see
How piteous false the poor decree
That Trade no more than trade must be!
Does business mean, *Die, you—live, I?*
Then 'Trade is trade' but sings a lie:
'Tis only war grown miserly.
If business is battle, name it so: :
War-crimes less will shame it so,
And widows less will blame it so.

There is a way out, continue the strings, but

Vainly might Plato's brain revolve it:
Plainly the heart of a child could solve it.

Now so far in the poem we have had a condemnation by the strings of the contemporary spirit of Trade, or business as he here calls it, in North, in South. The frailer, smaller of those strings, the violin, has had no solution to offer but simply the wail "would that Trade were dead". The stronger, more powerful strings are not content with that. They look toward a solution, and suggest that one is possible, that the heart of a child could solve it. But they do not give the exact solution. And so we await the next instrument, which is the flute, the instrument played so masterfully by Lanier himself. The flutes represent the voice of Nature and give the solution. That solution is not one of mere agrarianism, nor of a wholehearted acceptance of industry, or of a combination of both. The flute seems to realize that fundamentally the problem is national and single; that only superficially is it double and sectional. And so the flute strikes at the fundamental evil, the philosophy operating them both. Trade must be motivated by some spirit other than that of individualistic greed:

Thou Trade! thou king of the modern days!
Change thy ways,
Change thy ways;
Let the sweaty laborers file
A little while,
A little while,
Where art and nature sing and smile.
Trade! is thy heart all dead, all dead?
And hast thou nothing but a head?

Next the reeds stir in the orchestra, and out of their stirring rises the feminine voice of the clarinet which also pleads that Trade be motivated by heart as well as by head:

'O Trade! O Trade!' the Lady said,
I too will wish thee utterly dead
If all thy heart is in thy head.
For O my God! and O my God!
What shameful ways have women trod
At beckoning of Trade's golden rod.

The clarinet continues this theme and speaks at some length of

the ills accruing to women from Trade with its heartless philosophy. But note that the cry is not as with the violins, "would that Trade were dead." Rather it is that Trade live, but change his ways, that Trade be motivated by Heart as well as by Head.

The rest of the poem, except the last part, introduces nothing which we need consider in clarifying the theme. The horn speaks in the voice of Chivalry, condemning the heartless tenor of Trade. The hautboy, in the name of the Child, protests against the spirit of Trade, and wishes that the heart of a child might motivate it. And finally the bassoons, the ancient, wise, gray-bearded bassoons, give voice to Lanier's personal conviction as to just how Trade shall come to be so motivated. It was the theory he maintained in *TIGER LILLIES*, in *MUSIC AND POETRY*, in the *SCIENCE OF ENGLISH VERSE*, and in "Retrospects and Prospects", the theory that the American people, North and South, and eventually all people, through the medium of music, and a love for music, would come to be motivated in all realms of their living by heart as well as by head. The bassoons end the poem, then, with:

And ever Love hears the poor folks' crying,
And ever Love hears the women's sighing,
And ever sweet knighthood's death-defying,
And ever wise childhood's deep implying,
But never a trader's glozing and lying.

And yet shall Love himself be heard,
Though long deferred, though long deferred:
O'er the modern waste a dove hath whirled:
Music is Love in search of a word.

The hope that has stirred is the growing love for music and poetry, and these are to be the agents through which the spirit of Trade shall be regenerated, 'though long deferred.' The similarity here to the theme of Whitman in *DEMOCRATIC VISTAS* is fairly plain. Poetry to Lanier was a species of music. And poetry, said Whitman, and art in general, are the means by which Democracy shall be led away from a greedy emphasis on the material into a superior plane of culture which should include more than mere skill and shrewdness—something more than mere head, as Lanier phrases it.

A number of other well-known poems of Lanier continue this blast against the prevailing spirit of Trade and against the prevailing evils, industrial and agricultural, which that spirit had

spawned. Limitation of space forbids me to analyze each. But they should be mentioned. In "Corn", for instance, he inveighs against the shifting sands of Trade which swallow the flimsy homes of the poor, he pleads that farmers cease to depend on a single money-crop, mortgaging their homes and property, and losing all when the crop fails, cease to be a 'gamester's catpaw and a banker's slave.' In addition, I believe he rather pointedly alludes to the need for such soil conservation measures as are beginning to be widely used today.

Yon old deserted Georgian Hill
Bares to the sun his piteous aged crest
And seamy breast,
By restless-hearted children left to lie
Untended there beneath the heedless sky,
As barbarous folk expose their old to die.
Upon that generous-rounding side,
With gullies scarified
Where keen Neglect his lash hath plied,
Dwelt one I knew of old, who played at toil,
And gave to coquette Cotton soul and soil.

Reiterating, I believe that Northern industrialism cannot be blamed for the wide-spread ruination of the farmland of the South, such as that pictured above. That is one reason Lanier was not willing to rest content with a mere sectional attack against the North. The way out lay not backward toward the same old individualism. The remedy lies, he says,

'With antique sinew and with modern art,'

by which I understand him in his context to mean through intelligent labor coupled with such modern scientific methods as crop rotation and soil conservation measures.

Another poem, "The Waving of the Corn", though brief, contains a similar indictment. Likewise the short poem to Richard Wagner indicts, and voices the hope of the Symphony, that music shall eventually help to change Trade's spirit. The poem, "Hard Times in Elfland", is particularly noteworthy because of its modern applicability. Santa Claus is here portrayed as having mortgaged all Elfland in order to purchase stock in 'a little plan,

'That suits this nineteenth century.'

The plan was one by which a system of transportation was to be built ('An Elevated Track, of course', remarks Santa Claus), an

industry which would ultimately be used to distribute all of Dame Fortune's gifts to the receivers, to convey Death on his wide wanderings, to escort new babes to this world, and to contract for the endless peregrinations of restless nether-world spirits. In short, it was to be,

' . . . the biggest shipper, sir,
That e'er did business in this world!'

Accordingly, Santa Claus mortgaged everything, reindeers and all, and invested. The plan fails for some mysterious reason, and he is ruined. The poem concludes with an address to boys and girls of the time, telling them that he, Santa Claus, has made the best of a bad situation, and is bringing them *something*. But they must not look for much. Starke suggests that an allegory is possible in which the South is Santa Claus impoverished and made a fool of by the industries of the North. But such an interpretation is justified neither by anything else Lanier wrote, nor by the poem itself. Santa Claus is, rather, the gullibility of the entire age, not just a part of it, and he invests in a plan that suits the century, not the North. And the Elf-land that he mortgages is the whole interest in Fancy, that Trade, he felt, was injuring.

There is a brief suggestion of the attack in "The Marshes of Glynn", and in Lanier's final poem, "Sunrise", the theme is quite clear still. It is likely familiar. I point here only to the lines:

Old Want is awake and agog, every wrinkle a-frown;
The worker must pass to his work in the terrible town:
But I fear not, nay, and I fear not the thing to be done;
I am strong with the strength of my 'ord the Sun:
How dark, how dark soever the race that must needs be run,
I am lit with the Sun.

In the poem "Clover", though there is a suggestion of the same charge against Trade, the poet is considering his own position, the position of art, and of the artist, in such a system. He concludes that the artist has a function under any system, but the argument is not economic, and we shall consider it no further.

II

We have quoted sufficiently from Lanier, I believe, to indi-

cate that, not only in the words of Parrington was he "the first of our poets to cry out against the evils of industrialism", but that he went beyond that to a criticism of the spirit out which both industrialism and, later, farm tenancy, grew. Many witnesses have been called in substantiation of his attack on the evils of industrialism: Mims, Starke, Foerster, Bradford, Fagan, Knickerbocker, Parrington. But what of the Agrarian charge that, having cried out against such industrialism, Lanier proceeded to flatter it? The indictment, as I have said, is based on two things: that, in Mr. Warren's words, 'Lanier approved big corporations because they were needed'; and that, according to Mr. Tate, Lanier praises Trade in the 'Psalm of the West'. We have examined the first and found that Lanier approved corporations to the same extent to which the Agrarians state that they approve them. We now have to consider "The Psalm of the West".

The 'West' of this poem is American, the nation whose centenary of independence was then being celebrated. In such a poem and on such an occasion we should expect to find Lanier's nationalism at its height, his perspective broad. We should likewise expect to find the Agrarians attacking such nationalism. In neither expectation are we disappointed.

After a few opening lines which look to a time when economic evils will have been remedied, a review of the birth and a history of the development of America as a nation is given. After endless ages, an explorer, Bjorne, the Norseman, lands on the North American continent. Later, Are Mason sailed southward to Huittramannaland, to Carolina, and Georgia, and Florida. After that, Leif, bold son of Eric the Red, lands in New England. Then for years others come from Northland, but they were only flickerings to and fro in the darkness. At last comes Columbus, to whose courageous voyage much space is devoted. After dealing with the English colonization of America, the American Revolution is reviewed at length. And finally near the close we begin to draw near the part to which the Agrarians object. Lanier pictures the split between the two parts of this new nation of the West.

North in line and South in line
Yell the charge and spring the mine.
Heartstrong South would have his way,
Headstrong North hath said him nay:
O strong Heart, strong Brain, beware!

And then going back to the poem written in 1862, and 1865, which I have quoted earlier, "The Combat", Lanier uses the same figure to represent symbolically the rupture that follows, the joust between heart and head. The 1862 part of the poem he uses to picture Heart and Brain as both upset by the impact of the conflict, with Heart having the worst of it. He uses the 1865 part, precisely as before, to picture reunion:

Heart and Brain! no more be twain;
Throb and think, one flesh again!
Lo! they weep, they turn, they run;
Lo! they kiss; Love, thou art one!

Finally in a brief review of the whole poem, and looking towards the time when the conditions of the South and North may be improved, the poem ends.

Now the part objected to by the Agrarians is that written in 1865 and included here, just as it is in "The Symphony"—the part which pictures the reunion of the Head and the Heart, the North and the South. The Agrarians think that such a lack of resistance to the North is tantamount to a reversal of Lanier's position, to a flattering of Trade and to a lack of realism. They identify his use of the word *Trade* with Northern industrialism. They say that he praised nationalism, that nationalism was nothing but Northern sectionalism, and that Northern sectionalism was nothing but industrialism. Therefore, Lanier praised industrialism, and in so doing, betrayed the South. The argument has already been considered. Two things only need here be said: that the Agrarians, before condemning Lanier, did not become familiar enough with his poems to see that the part of the "Psalm of the West" which they thought indicated a reversal of views was an almost verbatim expression of those views he had set forth as a soldier on the battlefield and as a released prisoner immediately following the war; and second, that it is understandable why the Agrarians disagree with Lanier, since they think a solution of the economic problems of the South was to have been and is to be arrived at simply by fighting industry and the North. It is further understandable, in view of this fact, why they deny Lanier the right of even a poetic vision of re-union of North and South. But it is not understandable how an expression of such a vision,

or an expression of a difference of economic opinion, entitles one Southerner to name the other a traitor.

III

We have said that this charge of betrayal was based on four claims. Three of these have been considered, namely, was Lanier's removal to Baltimore in poor faith? Did he attack Trade and then turn to flatter it? and Was his Nationalism merely a Northern sectionalism? We shall now consider the fourth charge, which is, in the words of Mr. Allen Tate:

He accepted too readily and applauded too enthusiastically the . . . Science. . . of his own day—especially the delusion that the function of applied science is to make men at home in Nature “

It may be true that Lanier was too optimistic in his endorsement of new discoveries of science. He was quite enthusiastic over such discoveries as photography and phonography, and saw in them that process of etherialization of the arts to which we have already referred. Perhaps he was not sufficiently aware of the aesthetic loss resulting from the application of machinery to the production of art. But as Mr. Starke points out,⁴² and as Mr. Ransom grants,⁴³ it was impossible for Lanier to know in his time that science should become the hand-slave of industry, that the discovery of the incandescent light bulb would result in such Santa Clausian catastrophes as Samuel Insull. He may have been wrong in believing that science would be employed for the benefit of the many rather than for their exploitation. Yet even our own day cannot prove him entirely wrong in that, and one wonders if any day can prove him wrong in saying that science *should* be so employed. Even the Agrarians, if I understand the implications of their prefatory statements in *I'LL TAKE MY STAND*, would agree with him there. And for them to charge that a belief in science, mistaken or not, was merely an indication of his adoption

⁴²Tate, Allen, "A Southern Romantic," *THE NEW REPUBLIC*, 76 (Aug. 30, 1933), 67-70. (Purported Review of Starke's *BIOGRAPHY*).

⁴³Starke, A. H., "The Agrarians Deny a Leader," *AMERICAN REVIEW* (March, 1934), II, 534-53.

⁴⁴Ransom, J. C., "Hearts and Heads," *AMERICAN REVIEW*, II (March, 1934), 554-71. (Purported review of the discussion aroused by Starke's *BIOGRAPHY*.)

of Northern sectionalism is, plainly, to defy the facts. It was the application of scientific knowledge in a proper care for and culture of the highly erosive Southern soil that Lanier was advocating. It was a science divorced from sectional prejudice and applied to the ills of North and South alike that he desired. That is hardly Northern sectionalism. A few selections from his poetry may illustrate. First, did Lanier look on science as a panacea for all earthly ills? In a poem written to Bayard Taylor after Taylor's death, he says he does not wish Taylor back alive,

Into this charnel life, this lowlihead,
Not to the dark of sense, the blinking brain,
The hugged delusion drear, the hunger fed
On husks of guess, the monarchy of pain,

The cross of love, the wrench of faith, the shame
Of Science that cannot prove proof is. . . .

Science seems hardly to be worshipped there. Notice the phrase, 'not to the dark of sense'. For Lanier limits the benefits of science to the sensual realm. Nor does he think with the Humanitarians, as I have shown in "The Symphony", that man is a creature to be perfected through material means. The material appeal to the sense has a place, but not the only place, as he indicates in the "Psalm of the West":

And Science be known as the sense making love to the all,
And Art be known as the soul making love to the all,
And Love be known as the marriage of man with the all—
Till Science to knowing the highest shall lovingly turn,
Till Art to loving the highest shall lovingly burn,
Till Science to Art as a man to a woman shall yearn—.

I am inclined to believe that Lanier did not overlook the aesthetic loss to art when art became mechanized. He clearly distinguishes between science the sense and art the soul. What Lanier meant was that Science and Art were complimentary rather than antagonistic, as indicated in the line,

'Till Science to Art as a man to a woman shall yearn.'

In *TIGER LILLIES* and elsewhere he notes that many minds the world over were bitter in the belief that Science meant ultimately the death of Art. Lord Macaulay was among this number. Lanier says that this is not true, that science merely precedes art, must precede it, after the manner of a pioneer, and that art following

science makes out of the new materials of science new works of art, as Shelley made art from Erasmus Darwin's Botanical Gardens, a poet among Newtons. As he says himself elsewhere:

Once for all remembering the dignity of forms as we have traced it, remembering the relations of science as the knowledge of forms, of art as the creator of beautiful forms, of religion as the aspiration toward unknown forms and the unknown form-giver, let us abandon this unworthy attitude toward form, toward technic, in literary art, which has so long sapped our literary endeavor."

As in the "Centennial Cantata", science is good,

"So long as thy Science truth shall know."

Speaking of applied science, Mr. Ransom says, "Lanier does not appear to object to the factory system as such; as one that subtracts the dignity from human labor and the aesthetic value of the product."⁴⁸ But Mr. Ransom is mistaken; for we have already quoted Lanier as saying, in precise agreement with the stated principles of the agrarians, that primarily through the land, and not through machines can 'that individual and self-reliant manhood' which our Republic demands be derived. On the basis of the four charges, then, did Lanier betray the South? As I interpret the word *Southern*, he did not.

There are other charges made by the Agrarians; but I believe a consideration of them would no farther aid our main purpose, a determination of Lanier's main ideas with relation to the South. Accordingly, I shall only briefly list a few of them.

They declare that he demanded of the South a stern and non-sectional criticism, yet did not accept the same unreservedly for himself. We recall here his reaction when his "Centennial Cantata" was bitterly attacked in the North and highly praised in the South. Knowing that neither the criticism nor the praise was based on judgment of intrinsic merit, he rejected both. Further they say that he adopted as truth whatever furthered his success; that the things for which he pled were only the things which in

⁴⁸Baskerville, William Malone, *SOUTHERN WRITERS: BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL STUDIES*, Vol. I, Publishing House, M. E. Church South, Nashville, Tennessee: 1902. Pp. 243ff.

⁴⁹Ransom, *AMERICAN REVIEW*, II (March, 1934). P. 567.

our day have been achieved, and nothing more, or in other words, that he was merely the prophet of Twentieth Century corruption. Sufficient material has already been presented, I believe, to vitiate these accusations.

A final charge I shall briefly consider is an imputation that all are wrong who judge Lanier's poetry to portray Nature in the South. Whether the Agrarians like it or not, there is a definite South in Lanier's poems⁴⁸—nor is it merely the South of traditional poetry, but a real South. There are the marshes of Glynn County, Georgia, the Chattahoochee, in the hills of Georgia, the flats of Florida, Texas Mockingbirds, Tampa Robins, Georgia Oaks, Carolina Palms, the Tennessee Mountains, and such of their characters as Cain and Gorm Smallin', a type that was later to be developed by Mary Noailles Murfree. There is the forsaken farm, the impoverished plantation, coquette cotton, corn, mortgaged land, and Georgia dialect, in which he was to be followed by Joel Chandler Harris—these, summarily, are parts of Lanier's nature-description of his own region. That Lanier was a nature poet of the South, I shall not attempt to defend. If further evidence is needed, it may be found in Norman Foerster's *NATURE IN AMERICAN LITERATURE*, Chapter Seven, in which he devotes sixteen of his seventeen pages on Lanier to a discussion of him as a 'Poet of Southern Nature.'⁴⁹

To summarize, the following are the Agrarian charges which fall within our scope:

1. That by the end of the war Lanier was defeated and his spirit was broken.
2. That he had not one clear image or one clear idea to present to his age.
3. That his removal from the South was in bad faith.
4. That Lanier damned Trade, i.e., industry, and then flattered it.
5. That his nationalism was merely a Northern sectionalism.
6. That he adopted as truth whatever furthered his success.

⁴⁸See Fagan, N. B., "Sidney Lanier: Poet of the South." *JOHNS HOPKINS ALUMNI MAGAZINE* (March, 1932) xx, p. 232-41.

⁴⁹Foerster, Chapter Seven entire.

7. That he demanded of the South a stern and non-sectional criticism but would not accept the same for himself.
8. That he was too optimistic with reference to Science.
9. That he did not present Southern nature in his poetry.
10. That the evils of the present age constituted, in essence, the things for which he pled.

Answering these questions has been considered a secondary aim of this paper, and evidence, in keeping with its advisable length has been presented. It has further been suggested that the Agrarians make the charges against Lanier primarily because they identify his use of the word *Trade* with their own conception of industrialism, because they see the economic problems of the South to be solvable only in an energetic agrarian *versus* industrial battle, because, identifying sectional economic interest with total sectional interest, they also see the future life of the nation to rest on a sectional struggle. In short, they charge Lanier with betrayal because he refused to be, as they are, merely sectional.

With reference to our primary purpose I think we may suggest the following as certain ideas of Lanier's relative to the South:

He was *opposed* to the entrance of women into politics and the holding of public offices because of their corruptive power (politics, not women). He was opposed to a mere extrinsic and sectional appeal in art, and to emotional judgments in criticism of art. He was opposed to any sort of permanent subsidation of the farmer, to the disloyal action of those farmers who refused to coöperate in controlling the supply of farm products, to the dependence of the South on a single crop, a money-crop, to such large-scale farming in the South as that then beginning in the West, with its "mining for wheat", to the philosophy of unregulated exploitation of public possessions for private gain, and to any belief that held that a man's needs were purely physical and could be entirely met through material means.

He *avored* a deep reform of the prevailing philosophy of Commercialism, i.e., Trade, out of which he believed grew many of the evils of both Northern industrialism and Southern Agriculture. He suggested such immediate remedies to the South as subsistence farming, or the planting of edible crops rather than sal-

able ones. He suggested such crops as wheat, corn, peanuts, poultrying, dairying, and live-stock cultivation in addition to cotton. He favored the small farm or homestead in the South, but also acknowledged the necessity of corporations. He welcomed the advent of Science as a tool which should serve the nation and the world, and, with specific reference to the South, he advocated the application of scientific knowledge and experimental methods to the problems of farm life, both with reference to planting, to crop-rotation, variegation, and culture, and to soil maintainance. In this, and in many other respects, he was a poet of Southern Nature. And finally, he advocated a burying of sectional bitterness and hate. One feels that in the twentieth century he would have welcomed the radio, the cinema, the telephone, the aeroplane, and other such nationalizing influences in that they tend to break down those purely provincial interests on which sectional hatred is based. And one feels that what he said in the following quotation of 1874 is not at all out of place today in the midst of such a cry as would attempt to keep that sectional hate alive:

The war is over. What a fight it has been. We had to grip religious fanaticism and frantic patriotism for four years, and rascality for ten.

If there are any other three devils that are harder to wrestle with than these, they have not yet made their appearance in terrene history. I have been wondering where we are going to get a *Great Man* that will be tall enough to see over the whole country and direct that vast un-doing of things which has got to be accomplished in a few years. It is a situation in which mere cleverness will not begin to work. The horizon of cleverness is too limited; it does not embrace enough of the heart of man to enable a merely clever politician, such as those in which we abound, to lead matters properly in this juncture. . . . It is time for a man to arise, who is a man.²¹

One agrees with Lanier here in all save one particular. It seems that he was premature in declaring that 'frantic patriotism' was defeated, that the war was over.

²¹Letter to Judge Bleckley, quoted Starke, pp. 195-96.

by Robert G. Berkelman

AMERICA IN BRONZE

AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS

IN an interlude of the Forsyte sequence which should be especially interesting to Americans, Galsworthy has Soames, now old and lonely, seated before the Adams Memorial in Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, D. C. The russet oak leaves flutter about him unheeded. The bronze figure carries him down into the depths of himself. . . . Easy to rest quietly with that before you! America ought to sit there once a week!

In the midst of Soames' reverie two elderly persons—are they typical Americans?—drift through the enclosure, talking expansively of Texas. One tosses a glance over shoulder at the statue, mutters a curious "Well!"—and they pass on. During the course of the story the English characters, on the contrary, speak of the memorial as "the greatest man-made thing in America", and admit that they have nothing so good at home.

Henry Adams, now silent under the monument with his wife, once called the sculptor "a child of Benvenuto Cellini smothered in an American cradle". Child of the Renaissance, Saint-Gaudens certainly was; but the rest of the phrase applied much more aptly to Adams himself than to his friend.

I

More than any other man, Saint-Gaudens brought American sculpture to maturity. Though born in Dublin, the first of March, 1848, of an Irish mother and a shoemaker from Gascony, he became an American before he could toddle. When he was learning to read, the Manhattan papers were shouting news of the Crimean War. He needed no formal lessons in Americanization. Warring with rival fire-engine gangs, playing street pranks, falling in puppy love with all the peach-bloom girls of the neighbor-

hood, and tending his father's shop, of which Horace Greeley was a patron, taught him what he could not learn in the classroom.

But by far the most significant influence in his earliest period came with the six years of cutting stone and shell cameos for the ladies and beaux of New York, "miserable slavery" to which he was bound by his first master, a Savoyard who was most likely the first cutter of stone cameos in America. From the age of thirteen to nineteen he labored through long days, and in the evenings ambitiously studied drawing at the Cooper Institute. In this way Saint-Gaudens laid deep foundations for his later success, but also contracted the habit of over-work. Such a multitude of lion's-head cameos had he ground out in his teens, that twenty years later when he was helping his brother Louis model the lions for the Boston Public Library, Saint-Gaudens felt his hands performing automatically in the old accustomed manner.

His second period, from nineteen to thirty-three, when he was struggling for recognition as an artist, took him first to Paris and its Academy of Fine Arts. There, good friends, high spirits, and his own presumptuous hopes were his only possessions. Poverty drove him from cheap to cheaper quarters. On one occasion he moved all his belongings in a hand-cart, under the cover of night, in order to conceal their meagerness. Often he slept on a bare mattress on the floor, in deserted storerooms, in packing boxes. Yet there were also impecunious but blissful excursions to the sea and through the Alps. Driven to Rome by the Franco-Prussian War, he there contracted his first proud commission in sculpture. Back in New York, at the age of twenty-nine, he toiled and sang and waited pennilessly in a dreary studio above a savings bank. To remind himself of the fountains of Rome he had to be content with letting the faucet drip.

On a sunny afternoon in May, 1881, this period of trial came to a close. With the unveiling of his statue of Admiral Farragut, in Madison Square, New York, both American sculpture and Saint-Gaudens came of age. For the next sixteen years, all of them spent in this country, he was to pour out a slow but steady stream of low-relief medallions and public monuments, lavishing upon them, as Henry Adams said, "his usual interminable last touches".

II

Most authorities rank Saint-Gaudens as the foremost sculptor of the western hemisphere and among the most distinguished anywhere since Michelangelo; yet an amazing proportion of otherwise cultured Americans, oblivious to the fact that each nation produces only the art it continues to deserve, know little of his sculpture and almost nothing of the man. What kind of person was he that his friends should think of him as a re-incarnation of the Renaissance?

In 1887, Robert Louis Stevenson, passing through New York to visions of health in the Adirondacks, sat to Saint-Gaudens for a low-relief medallion. At the time, the Scotsman described his new American admirer as "one of the handsomest and nicest fellows I have seen", and fell into the habit of calling him "the god-like sculptor". Saint-Gaudens was then turning forty and he did have about him an Olympian air. Such sleek dandifications as pointed boots might be anathema to him, but his son avows that he dressed with meticulous art. His figure was spare but well-knit; his hands, supple and firm. Most arresting and exotic was his head. In letters to his friends he liked to caricature himself, accentuating the pointedness of his auburn-bearded chin, his rather long, dark-brown hair, his shaggy brows, and his high-bridged nose of a lion. It amused him to surmise that the resemblance between his figure-four profile and that of Francis I spoke of their common lineage. His eyes, close-set and small, had the piercing quality of those in Verocchio's statue of Colleoni.

Celtic fancy and wistfulness, an ardor intensified by work, and a child-like love of good sport went into his composition. His personality, as a result, was full of enigmatic and endearing contradictions: capricious irritability and patience; gentleness and profane storming; generosity in paying encouraging compliments to rival artists and, when occasion demanded, a cutting frankness; a respect for reality and a scorn for sham, along with a delight in the fantastic and elusive. He had an inherent love of fun-making, especially the fun-making of young people; yet often in the midst of it a detached look came into his eyes.

Yet Saint-Gaudens was no moping esthete feeding upon a green and yellow melancholy. Before illness poisoned his red-blooded

health and joviality, he was perennial boy. Smoking never appealed to him; he toyed with cigars. But he had a child's passion for ice cream and hansom cabs, a man's passion for a juicy story and for rollicking parties at Delmonico's. Life was a game to be played with zest—when there was time. As a youngster, he had braved the rocks and floating debris in the East River to enjoy a plunge. As an academy student his favorite intoxication had been swimming at the French coastal resorts.

Vocalizing was another handy safety-valve. Fellow students had found it easy to beguile him into bawling the "Marseillaise" while he was sketching. Through most of his mature years, while dabbling at his clay models, he was in the habit of bellowing popular ballads and approximated arias. In this way work itself was often sport. "I've been putting Negro heads of all types in the Shaw," he once wrote to Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer, "and it's been great fun, and I'm happy as a clam over it, and consequently beautifully negligent of every friend." His bushy brows and keen eyes awed his assistants, but he was never the kind to awe himself. His dignity did not weigh down upon him. As a fifty-plus oldster and one of the gods of the Parisian salons he preferred to ride a bicycle to his studio. Threading in and out among the cabs served to startle the shopkeepers and laundry girls along the way and to satisfy his own boyish vanity—until he was spilled into the gutter.

Concocting caricatures was his artistic holiday. It was usually his pen which embroidered the menus for high-spirited banquets. Swift sketches enlivened his letters. In one to the painter Will Low, who had introduced him to Stevenson, he wrote of their meeting: "I'm in that beatific state." And here he drew himself salaaming before a profile of R. L. S. decked with halo. "It makes me very happy, and as the pursuit of happiness is an inalienable right, God given, one and indivisible (vide Constitution of the U. S.) [here a sketch of a spread eagle] I'm damned if I don't think I've a right to be, provided I don't injure anyone. . ."

The caricatures occasionally soared to the sculptural in medium. One clay relief depicts his friend Finn, arms parenthetic like those of a bulging wrestler appreciating himself. In hocus-pocus Latin the inscription runs: "In honorus Jamus Waldorfensus Mickus Finn—Conquistatus Feminus—Pittoratus Em-

meritus—Athleticus Invincibilibus et Superbus—Welcome Home.” And the same man created the somber Adams Memorial!

And the same man had fire in his composition,—fire banked by ready sympathy and a sure sense of fairness. An assistant has recorded his sudden fits of irritability when harassed by petty troubles. Though generous-hearted and noble when all went well, Saint-Gaudens sometimes entered the studio downcast and sullen. One winter morning, when the hunchback taking care of the fires had done a poor job, the master wrathfully flung thunderbolts of modelling clay about the room, driving the others to cover under the staging.

Such rages, though, were seldom more than explosions of excess energy—all powder and no shell. Despite them he held his workers and his friends with hoops of steel. Formal gatherings bored him, but at one time he enjoyed membership in fifteen clubs, preferring to listen to a few congenial cronies at a time. With Alfred Garnier, a chum met in the Parisian academy, he hiked and wrestled and swam, a friendship to last for nearly forty years. Among his choice intimates were the architects Stanford White and Charles McKim, both of whom collaborated with him. White had been attracted to him first in New York by over-hearing Saint-Gaudens at work yodelling selections from Beethoven and Mozart. Together the three “red-heads”—White, McKim, and Saint-Gaudens—once went on a lark down the Rhone, on a garlic wafted boat. What a traffic problem they must have aroused when later they fell in with red-haired Mark Twain!

White might have been a creation by Dickens. His hair and eyebrows stood erect and his mustaches formed ogee curves—more commonly called “Handlebars”. His letters, often scribbled on scraps of tracing paper, bristled with hells, damns, devils, gin, and seltzer! One note ended thus: “Here I haven’t any room to write! Hell. Good-bye!” His salutations ran the climactic gamut of “Gus”, “Gustibus”, “Horgustus”, “Beloved!” Saint-Gaudens considered him a big man,—big in body, in mind, in heart,—and at the time of his scandalous death wrote him a public defense and tribute.

Henry Richardson, as Romanesque in person as in the architecture he designed, recommended Saint-Gaudens for the Shaw commission and fascinated the sculptor with his spluttering Rabe-

laisian speech, his blood-red dining room and oval black-oak table, to which he sat down in a canary-yellow waistcoat. John LaFarge, painter and lecturer, influenced his artistic tastes as much as any man. One of his most devoted admirers was Richard Watson Gilder, editor of the *Century* in its hey-day.

In his *Education*, Henry Adams maintained that Saint-Gaudens had scarcely more instinct of rhetoric than General Grant. Speech-making made him perspire and tremble. His official letters had to be improved by his wife. Fine-spun discussions of Beauty and Truth wearied him. He could not, or would not, expand his philosophy of art. He spoke best through his fingers. When asked for a written comment on Tolstoy's *What Is Art?* he declined, lest he say "some damphool thing". Writing was to be shunned "as devil fears holy water". Extremely uneven is quality, his letters sprout infelicities and mistakes that cannot be excused entirely by haste. His notes of praise are always generously fine in motive but often wretched in expression; his only terms of compliment seemed to be "great", "beautiful", "swell". Yet if one were to weed out his letters, one would come frequently upon surprisingly well-turned phrases and airy nothings. In one memorable instance he writes of an acquaintance who "cracked his constructed jokes, manufactured his silversmith puns, and cackled over them." In dramatizing for his son the uneventful news of the New Hampshire homestead he could make professional comedians dyspeptic with envy: "A collar-button was discovered in the stomach of a cow. The question is how did the cow get under the bureau?"

What literary tastes Saint-Gaudens had were simple and undeveloped. *Robinson Crusoe* had been his earliest love. In his twenties he had been attracted to Plutarch's *Lives*. When he was turning forty, Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights*, he testified, "set me aflame as have few things in literature." His exuberance demanded action. Fiddling on the strings of psychological analysis lulled him to sleep. yet somehow Meredith's *Diana of the Crossways* impressed him deeply. On Henry James' contortions he remarked, "You have to hold your hands and your feet, stand upside down, take a bath, and everything to understand it." Once he made a rash promise to read Browning's *The Ring and the Book*, "but unless a man's style is clear," he confessed, "I am too

lazy and have too little time to devote to digging gold out of the rocks. . . I got the Schopenhauer that Shiff spoke about . . . but it is so deadly in its pessimism, judging from the ten or eleven lines that I read, that I flung it away." Like many another, though, he found Shakespeare growing upon him. In his fiftieth year he took his young son to see *Hamlet* in London, and reported, "As I grow older, the greatness of Shakespeare looms higher and higher; every line, every word is so deep, so true."

About religion and his personal philosophy he rarely talked, either with his friends or with his own family. His work was his religion; it occupied most of his thinking and acting and colored his whole life. As a child he was reared in the Catholic faith; he died, however, a member of no church. Conventional Christianity was too gloomy for him and too often insincere. Mutterers of such phrases as "upon us miserable sinners" were "craw-thumpers". Emerson would have been a spiritual brother to him. Only the joy in religious experience appealed much. What was ecclesiastical form devoid of force? The character of Christ meant more than all abracadabra.

Like that of most of us, his central philosophy was nebulous, rather unarticulated, dependent considerably upon the state of his nerves and digestion. Depressed by illness he wrote his wife that "there is too much misery and unhappiness in the world, and all this struggle for beauty seems so vain and hopeless." Among his papers, however, there is a profession of a more prevailing faith: ". . . To bear up against what seems at times the great doom that is over us, love and courage are the great things." To try to do good and to put forth one's best efforts would at least be a drop "in the ocean of evolution".

In *Moby Dick* Melville observes: "So soon as I hear that such or such a man gives himself out for a philosopher, I conclude that, like the dyspeptic old woman, he must have 'broken his digester.'" In his healthy prime Saint-Gaudens might have chuckled assent. It is most significant that until he became ill there was in his correspondence next to nothing of philosophizing.

III

Such was Saint-Gaudens in his most productive period. The

turning point came on June 1, 1897, the morning after the unveiling of the impressive Shaw Memorial. All of his early privation and strenuous labor gathered itself into a hammer blow of lumbago and sciatica. From that day forth he was never entirely well again. William Dean Howells observed that he looked like a "weary lion".

But that fall it was not so much to escape illness and seek rest that he embarked again for Paris. Rather, now that he had won the brightest laurels at home, he dared to have his artistic stature taken by more exacting European eyes. For this voyage the man of erstwhile zest prepared "as one prepares for a fight", tides of blue melancholy fitfully arising in him. At the Paris exhibition his Sherman was stuck bang up in the center of the garden". The success brought him his "first touch of swelled head". He was so "tickled" that he was "ready to dance a jig". "My Victory is getting on well. It's the grandest Victory ever made. Hoorah!" But the excitement resulted in three sleepless nights, and he was left feeling like "the last run of shad". Out of the goblet of praise he drank, for a while, re-assurance and determination. The wine, though, was to turn sour. Cancer was beginning secretly to undermine him. Moods of elation had a way of dissolving into a gray lassitude for which he himself could not account. He wrote then: "When I work, of course, I'm interested; but when the weather is dark, even then I wish it was all over and I were in a hole with the daisies growing smilingly over me." This from the man who was being acclaimed as one of the greatest living artists and decorated with badges and honorary degrees!

The whims of weather increasingly dictated his moods. Like Joseph Turner and Walt Whitman, he became a worshipper of the "splendid silent sun". Clear heavens captivated "like a beautiful woman". Overcast skies brought rain to his spirit. Like Goethe he grew restless and unproductive when the barometric pressure declined. Autumn chill and falling leaves made him morose. On a side trip to England and Scotland, during which the winter sky was a sheet of lead for ten consecutive days, he lost all interest and ambition.

Celtic Gascon though he was in temperament, he had become thoroughly American in his inner loyalties. The American cradle

of which Adams wrote was far more uncomfortable to Adams himself than it had ever been to his friend. Away from America, Saint-Gaudens felt dispossessed. From Paris he wrote: "... Coming here has been a wonderful experience . . . to find how much of an American I am. I always thought I was a kind of a cosmopolitan, gelatinous fish that belonged here, there, and anywhere. 'Pas du tout,' I belong in America, that is my home, that is where I want to be and to remain."

At this time he came to know Henry James. With the slim, lithe Whistler—white lock in frizzled hair and monocle to eye—he occasionally dined at Foyot's opposite the Luxembourg. During the same years, approaching 1900, he was intimate with Henry Adams, took walks with him in the Bois de Boulogne, and shared his delight in the cathedral of Amiens. In thanking him for a copy *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*, Saint-Gaudens, much to our amazement, called the somewhat statuesque laureate of frustration "dear Old Stick-in-the-Mud"! A circular low-relief caricature presents Adams, who tried to hide a sensitive heart beneath a crusty exterior, buoyed by wings of porcupine quills, the inscription reading "Porcupinus Angelicus".

In the summer of 1900 this European interlude ended abruptly with a warning from his physician that he must return home immediately for an operation or lose his life. That fall, temporarily recovering, he confided in his old friend White that in Paris he had stood on the brink of insanity. The next seven years, spent mostly at his beautiful home in Cornish, New Hampshire, were a blend of suffering and joy. The vision of Death hovered over the aging man, spreading her poppies and laurel much as she does in his own memorial for young Shaw; yet paradoxically it was then that he set free all his natural love of play. With his Celtic mingling of gay spirits and pensiveness he now observed, in answer to the question whether he had found the artistic life worth the candle, "I wish I'd played more when I was young. I took things too seriously. . . The thing to do is to play more and to flirt more."

Not long after the operation for which he had hastened home he spent five more weeks on a hospital bed. A few years later, while he was in New York, fire gutted his Cornish studio and destroyed the sculpture in progress and his even more valued

letters and mementoes. In this period Hamlin Garland, meeting Saint-Gaudens on his visits to the New York doctors, noted his haggard, granite-like face, his half-comic and half-snarling self-derision, his grumbling over cereal coffee and the prohibition of ice cream. The following spring he went to Brookline for another operation. From that Summer to his death, in August 1907, he was always in pain.

Yet until his final helplessness he revelled in sheer living as never before. The clouds in his sky seemed only to make the sunset more splendid. He enjoyed the apple peelings thrown on the studio stove for their fragrance. He tasted the triumphs and exasperations of golf. To old friend Garnier, during an interim of comparative well-being, he admitted that his self-immolating existence had been that of a "damn fool" and that now he stopped work at one and spent the rest of the day catching up on his boyhood.

And he almost did catch up. He enjoyed the companions who had clustered about his rustic court. To a friend of the family he reinforced his invitation with a sketch of her arriving on wings, suitcase in hand. Awaiting her stood Saint-Gaudens himself, clad in Roman shorts and sandals, his body one big heart stuck full of arrows. Winter among the New Hampshire hills was especially exhilarating sport. Sculpture wasn't in it with tobogganning! He awed others with his reckless speed. After thirty-five years he came back to skates. A "magnificent black eye" and a gashed forehead, achieved at hockey, gave him immense pride.

But he was most poignantly impressed, more than by medals and accumulating honorary degrees, which made him want to crawl under a table, by the celebration presented for him on the twentieth anniversary of his coming to Cornish. Louis Shipman had written a Greek masque; Percy Mackaye, the prologue. Among the cast were Kenyon Cox, Maxfield Parrish, Norman Hapgood. When the performance was ended and as the June light faded behind the hills across the Connecticut, his friends presented him with a golden bowl, and in a chariot drove him and his wife from the pine grove through the fields to their home. Death might be in him, but life still smiled.

In the last months, unable to stand, he had to be carried about the studios in a sedan chair. During this time he wrote to Edwin

Abbey: "We are not dead yet, by Jingo! are we? . . . I am stretched out on a couch at this moment in the flickering sunlight. I will stick at it until I am finally stretched out." He liked to sit on the studio porch, when he was not directing the work of assistants, and look off over pines and across the river to the highest hills. When pain did not intervene, he enjoyed, as we can see in the *Reminiscences* dictated during his last year, an old man's final delight: his memory. He recalled most vividly the pranks of his boyhood: the stolen sweet potatoes baked in a makeshift stove of cobblestones, the high hats knocked off by string stretched in the summer dusk, his long night spent in the Mercer Street station for "sassing" a policeman. In and out of his recollections his mother moving,—sensitive mouth and eyes, dark hair parted in the middle, earrings and oval brooch. His first employer shouting "Nom de Dieu!" and banging his feet on the work table until the lunch crumbs danced. His father caught musing at midnight, bareheaded and alone before the Farragut made by his boy. New England soldiers marching through Union Square and singing "John Brown's Body". General Grant on horse at the great New York review. Lincoln riding in a carriage somehow too small for him, down Fifth Avenue to the presidency. Lincoln lying in his coffin in City Hall; going back through the long line to see him again. Exploring the Alhambra, "one of the two or three great pearls of beauty on this globe". Life would be worth living all over—to be able to smell and see again the flowers blooming in Capri at Easter, and to drive again from Salerno to Amalfi, the steep hillsides checkered with vineyards, dust powdering the lacquer of olive leaves, and the solid blue crumbling to white below the cliffs.

A few days before Saint-Gaudens died, as he lay watching the sun go down behind Ascutney, he said, "It's very beautiful, but I want to go farther away."

Several hundred miles to the south his own unnamed masterpiece, one of the most profoundly moving creations of modern times, still sat dreaming over the grave of Mrs. Henry Adams. Face shadowed by folds of her headdress she (but the figure is really sexless as well as unnamed) was gazing down with brooding calmness upon the sufferings, the joys, the mysteries of this life

and the hereafter. Both the statue and its creator had attained peace.

IV

What impress did this man leave? Through high standards based upon his own integrity and through achievement unsurpassed here, Saint-Gaudens exerted upon our fine arts a more salutary influence than had any other American. Not all of our sculpture before his Farragut, in 1881, was definitely bad; but most of it was derivative, pretty, or amusingly pompous—blind Nydias, lost Pleiads, theatrical Zenobias. The worst of it, though in hard marble, was simply squashy. Of his own earlier work, an academic Silence with hushing finger to lips and a funny Hiawatha with pug on his head, Saint-Gaudens was abjectly ashamed and side-stepped all reference to it.

One of the clearest illustrations of the false heights to which American sculpture and taste had soared was Horatio Greenough's Washington. In mid-century regarded the ninth marvel of the modern world, even by the elect, and exposed on the Capitol lawn for decades, at present it is languishing most fittingly in some official basement—an enormously expensive white elephant. Washington, with Roman toga fallen to his waist and leaving his torso bare as though he had just emerged from a Roman bath, sits in a sort of grand rubdown chair, his left hand holding forth a symbol of power, his right pointed heavenward in the manner of Fourth-of-July oratory. Such far-fetched "cock-a-doodle-doo" nauseated Saint-Gaudens. Like most great art of any kind, his figures do not pose at all. Self-containedly they go their own ways, with no attitudinizing for the bleachers.

Besides putting a squib under sentimentality and grandiloquence, he came out of his studio on occasion to lend his aid and prestige to organized art, for the sake of young aspirants and for the public. Fresh from the schools of Paris he had founded in New York the Society of American Artists, because, "mad as hops", he believed that the National Academy of Design had become tyrannical and outmoded. No slave to academic rules, he was, though, an apostle of serious academic discipline to counteract the superficial, easy fads of the little Rodinists. He himself taught for years at the Art Students' League, generously

giving of himself far beyond his scheduled hours. One of his favorite assistants, Frederick MacMonnies, received his aid to study in Europe. To associates in sculpture his word was law. Daniel Chester French, who asserted, "When you can pin Saint-Gaudens down and get a real criticism from him, it is better than anybody's", postponed his wedding for six months in order to remodel a statue the legs of which Saint-Gaudens had declared too short.

One of the founders of the American Academy of Fine Arts in Rome, he strove also to improve training in the United States. By the turn of the century he could sincerely advise novices that their opportunities for learning here were quite the equal of those abroad, yet recommended travel to escape provincialism. Against Stanford White, who wanted European artists to decorate the Boston Library, he advocated the Americans John Sargent and Edwin Abbey. For the artistic success of the Chicago Fair of 1893, for the fine development of the National Capital, and for the improvement of our coinage, we owe much to him. Though foreign-born and foreign-trained he has been surpassed by no American artist in the quiet patriotism that builds and beautifies.

To sculpture itself he bequeathed several distinctive contributions. Thanks to years of cameo-cutting and fundamental training in draftsmanship he created masterpieces in low—and high—relief that have not been equalled since the Italians of the fifteenth century, and paid for this skill by being obliged to fight always against mere picturesqueness. One of the finest low-reliefs is the Stevenson—the circular one in Indianapolis, rather than the inferior rectangle in Edinburgh. A marvel in perfect spacing, in harmonious lines, in clear characterization, it shows the frail but indomitable romancer propped up in bed, a manuscript in his lap. Of the high-reliefs by far the greatest is the Shaw Memorial, across from the Massachusetts State House. It represents the ill-fated twenty-five-year-old colonel, with genuine dignity bestride his horse and leading to the Civil War the Negro troops half of whom are to be killed in action with him. It may be argued that the low-relief Angel of Death hovering over the group is a needless intrusion of the allegorical and that the insistent rhythm of the marching men, bounded as they are by the architectural framework, does not possess the self-contained power of the great-

est sculpture (it may even seem more a superb illustration in a book); but Saint-Gaudens had a way of saying: "You may do anything at all, if you do it well enough." That it was done well enough to inspire William Vaughn Moody is evidenced in his eloquent "Ode in Time of Hesitation".

Another valuable example was Saint-Gaudens' insistence upon effective settings for public monuments. Collaborating with White and, less frequently, with McKim, he was at great pains to secure a base and an environment that would reinforce in line and atmosphere the idea in his statue. The bronze Farragut, in Madison Square, stands on a pedestal as though on an admiral's deck, waves cut into the pedestal under him, and to each side, lining the back of the exedra bench, are low-relief figures of Loyalty and Courage. The seat, the pedestal, the commanding figure are perfectly blended into a unit.

The Sherman and Victory, alongside Fifth Avenue, in the southeast corner of Central Park, is another glorification of Civil War service. It has been ranked by Kenyon Cox as an equestrian work just below the Gattamelata in Padua and the Colleoni in Venice. Whether or not it is worth while trying to arrange artistic creations on their proper ladder rungs of value, the monument is there to remind us, its gold-leaf surface glistening in the sun, that we too have had a genius among us. We need but open our eyes. Those critics who have allowed their principles to harden into inflexible laws have found fault again with the mingling of realistic horse and rider and the allegorical Victory. But here surely the sculptor has "done it well enough". The Greeks, he once pointed out, did the same thing. Especially from the street side, the three figures, if not in kind at least in harmonizing line, blend inevitably. Victory's upraised arm blessing the land with peace, the flow of her striding legs and wings and swirling drapery, the S-curves in the horse's neck, the bold sweep of Sherman's mantle, the lines of the saddle cloth, the horse's streaming tail, one taut hind leg, the bough of Georgia pine lying on the earth,—everything, as though in an impelling breeze, lifts upwards and forwards. The whole composition is invigorated with the spirit of the famous Nike of Samothrace without being in any sense a mere echo.

The standing Lincoln, which Arnold Bennett proclaimed one of

the finest things in all America, is placed strategically at a converging of walks in Lincoln Park, Chicago. The solemn yet deeply human figure of the president himself, the chair of state from which he has arisen, the pedestal, the swelling exedra bearing quotations from his most celebrated speeches, the background of trees,—all together make it, according to Lorado Taft, the greatest sculptural portrait in the western hemisphere.

Fra Angelico knelt in prayerful attitude when he created, Saint-Gaudens did not. Nonetheless he was equally devoted to the most exacting ideals of his art. His motto was *Le Coeur au Métier*. Nothing short of his best satisfied him. He was forever making changes in his work just before or even after it was finished. Because he and White felt that his Diana, on the tower of the old Madison Square Garden, seemed out of proportion, they took it down and at their own expense remodeled it. Committees were exasperated by what they assumed was merely his procrastination. The Shaw, from first sketches to unveiling, spanned fourteen years! He wanted his works to grow along with him. In giving him Harvard's honorary doctorate, President Eliot complimented him upon not courting "the mortal years it takes to mould immortal forms." Saint-Gaudens himself once wrote to a fellow artist: "It is so refreshing to find a sculptor who is willing to put all the time necessary on a great public monument, when one reflects on the way so much impressive work is rushed through with such shameful results." And in a letter to his son: "It's so in the production of anything good in art or literature or anything else,—it is at the cost of pain and sweat and doing what we don't want to do and training our minds and bodies to do what is uncomfortable." What he termed the indolent "sissies" of art made him snort with scorn.

Walter Pater declared that "the way to perfection is through a series of disgusts." The phrase might well have been the golden rule of Saint-Gaudens' art. With Michelangelo he labored *con amore*, and trusted that "trifles make perfection". He made twenty-seven sketches of his Peter Cooper, varying hat, coat, and cane; more than thirty attempts at an angel for the background of the Philips Brooks, and then used none of them. For the design of the standing eagle on the twenty-dollar gold piece commissioned by Theodore Roosevelt he made about seventy models,

and often placed two dozen of them in a row for visitors to choose. The forty Negro heads modeled for the Shaw were carefully reduced to those sixteen best harmonizing with the whole design. Seven hours of painstaking toil were concentrated upon the colonel's sleeve to make it fold perfectly. Countless improvements were lavished upon the Sherman and Victory, which was eleven years in the making. The 1052 letters on the Edinburgh Stevenson were designed and re-designed twelve times! Little wonder that he had no time left to theorize about art with the long-haired posers.

His one distinct shortcoming as an artist was his failure to create any truly distinguished work in marble, the supreme test of the sculptor. The bold directness needed for success in that medium seemed to be denied to him. Like Lorenzo Ghiberti he was primarily—and almost exclusively—an artist in bronze, one might almost call him the painter in bronze, for though he usually conceived a statue in the nude, when he arrived at clothing it he seemed to become more interested in decorative picturesqueness than in sculptural masses.

The essence of his style is to be found in his characteristic fusion of tense power and graceful elusiveness. Vigor in manner he called "bang, bang, bang!" Charm was "the fragrance of a rose". Seldom if ever does his work go to the extreme of bang-bang force, and rarely does it break into sportiveness. Rather he tempered one with the other. Much of the exuberance of his healthy years found outlet, apparently, in his love of drama and music, and in his caricatures. Except in his medallions and the exquisite Diana, there is no exclusive concentration upon sheer grace or sprightliness. His realism and his idealizing imaginativeness hold each other in a balanced tension that makes for the most enduringly satisfying art.

If America is willing to let her young sculptors lose heart or strive for a cheap notoriety with fantastic concoctions, she can most effectively do so by allowing her appreciation of Saint-Gaudens to grow cold.

by Carl Edwin Burklund

PREFACE TO AN ESSAY

There is no memory to trouble
the flesh or undo the proud mind.
The calendars betray us, recollection
reaches no further than the broken
column, the spent glory. Wind
scatters its hieroglyphics over
the salt wastes where
evening darkens. . . .

So forgotten
of what lies burrowed beyond memory,
against the loneliness and cold
we margin silence with fire-dreams,
shadow with flame

and lo:
godheads arise, thunders speak
wrath over clouded seas, infinite
pity rains its love on the huddled
altar groups, benignant
tempers the felt hunger,
the parched cry.

Arrogant

with loot of the free fingers, the stumbled
erect posture, arrogant
with flints and wheels and the slow fire
driven to the convolute brain, we
write our critique, assure
geometries to space, publish the soul,
issue imperatives bonded to hell and heaven,
and out of the sweet stings of the vain flesh
find in the rigid orbit of the stars
duty and law. . . .

Meanwhile

silence prepares and the frost
and the long night, whereto
the wind utters its
preface, whispering forgotten
syllables over the salt wastes,
the oblique shadows where
evening darkens.

by Carlos Baker

THE PERMANENT SHELLEY

THE mud and dust of a hundred and twenty years have done something to obscure the luminosity of Shelley's wings, and to certain of his modern readers it requires an effort to see them shining through the tatters of Victorian criticism. We may be thankful that Shelley is not now generally regarded as an Icarus who soared too close to the sun and returned a little touched by heat-stroke. The effort to rehabilitate Shelley has, in fact, led some of his supporters to the opposite extreme, for the Shelley we meet in the learned journals of the past twenty years is often a cool and determined revolutionary, with a subversive gleam in his eye and a radical French treatise in his pocket. Both concepts are palpable half-truths, one-sided and therefore misleading, and they prevent us from seeing Shelley as he was and is: a serious artist with a strong moral and philosophical bias, and a resolute evangelical purpose.

As brilliantly one-sided as Macaulay's *Johnson*, Arnold's famous essay has done much to fix in the reader's mind the crazy and false stereotype of a mad Shelley. But the steps by which Arnold was led to condemn Shelley are clear enough. From a reading of Dowden's over-sentimentalized biography of the poet he emerged in anger and disappointment, troubled by the dichotomy which seemed to exist between the beauties of Shelley's poetry and what seemed to him the moral deficiency of Shelley the man. Arnold is ready to admit that Shelley's work passes muster when evaluated by any purely aesthetic criterion. But he sees that mere beauty of form and imagery is not enough. "Let no one suppose that a want of humour and a self-delusion such as Shelley's have no effect upon a man's poetry." Having detected a worm in the bud, Arnold is too ready to believe that the plant is diseased in root and branch. Admitting his "beauties", Arnold by implication denies Shelley a solid core of ethical, philosophical, or religious conviction. In life Shelley seemed a beautiful and

addle-pated boy; therefore his poetry, though certainly beautiful, must be ineffectual, and the total effect of Shelley as man and poet could be represented by the figure 0.

Rightly or wrongly, Arnold is equating the poet Shelley with the man Shelley. In order to go on thinking of the poetry as charming and beautiful, he would have been willing to accept an incomplete picture of the life. Of that life, however, Dowden's biography compels him to recognize certain ridiculous and odious aspects; he must now revise downward his concept of Shelley's poetry. He promises to show that "our former beautiful and lovable Shelley" survives in despite of Dowden. This he is unable to do, for when he comes to give his final estimate, the ghost of Dowden rises up to confound him. "Beautiful and lovable" becomes "beautiful and ineffectual" and Arnold turns away.

Among the shortcomings of Arnold's essay the most considerable is the tendency to over-emphasis. His excuse is plausible: he has just been reading Dowden, and "what is fresh is likely to fix our attention more than what is familiar." But no attempt is made to present a complete picture of Shelley. Except to point an accusing finger at the "irregular relations" of the Italian period, Arnold wholly neglects the last four years of Shelley's life, although this is the period to which all the great poetry belongs. Also neglected is the poetry itself. Again the excuse is clear: "Of his poetry I have not space now to speak." The few sentences in the essay which do speak of the poetry give no indication that Arnold had grasped the strongly ethical nature of Shelley's mature work. Scarcely adequate are the best adjectives he can assemble with which to describe it: *beautiful, lovable, charming*.

But the most important question in connection with the essay is this: Can Arnold properly reject Shelley's poetry as empty and vain because he is convinced of Shelley's ineptitude as a moral man? It does not seem to me that the facts warrant the conclusion. In practice, as Arnold must have known, a man may fall short of another's ideal of him, or of his own ideals. But his personal failure to live up to them does not show that those ideals are shallow, or that the poetry in which he embodies them is empty and vain. As Arnold among his shattered icons did not realize, the permanent worth of Shelley's poetry (exclusive of its purely aesthetic value) is measurable by the soundness of the

ethical, or philosophical, or religious convictions by which the poetry is informed. As to the soundness of these convictions, each generation will judge according to its lights. But we may reasonably ask, as Arnold did not trouble to do, what those convictions were.

Through most serious artists runs a strain of the prophetic. Shelley's career as poet falls squarely between the French Revolution and the Victorian era. Although in his youth he reflects the doctrines of the one, he anticipates in his maturity the evangelical and forward-looking spirit of the other. He moves gradually from a preoccupation with material reforms to a concern with mankind's spiritual environment, and in that movement reflects the trend of his age.

In the face of dead institutions Shelley was never one to capitulate. Chronologically closer to the spirit of the French Revolution, he is at first willing to go farther than most of the eminent Victorians in casting off the outworn garments of the past; he is at one with the turn-of-the-century political thinkers in his distrust of institutionalism, and of the rule of force over right. Against the institution of monarchy Shelley cries out in *Queen Mab*, and remains all his life a member of His Majesty's Vehemently Disloyal Opposition. But one wonders how it was possible to ally oneself with any other party during the regency and early reign of George IV. While the elder George dozed away his last decade at Windsor, brightening only occasionally into sanity, the dissolute Prince hastened through an allowance of a million pounds a year and the people's blood was shed at Spa Fields and Peterloo unheeded by all but men like Hunt and Shelley.

As a young man, Shelley is a revolutionist. Soon after his marriage to Harriet we find him in Ireland, seeking to incite rebellion by soap-box oratory and the distribution of subversive literature. But Shelley deferred in these matters to the counsel of his future father-in-law, and under Godwin's aegis became more an evolutionist than a revolutionist. Like the Fabian Socialists of a later day Godwin believed, and taught Shelley to believe, in the inevitability of gradualism. He preferred sowing seeds of wisdom to breaking heads, and hoped that the gradual subjugation of the tribe of Cain would result in the elevation of men of strong will and good principles who together would recreate the world.

One may fairly ask how the artist enters the picture. Poets, according to Shelley's famous dictum, are the unacknowledged legislators of the world. But it is their task to act rather as catalytic agents than as governors with definitive social programs. Art is at best an "ardent intercessor", and Shelley is content to act as prophet and ethical counsellor, presenting a broad, general concept of the ideal world of the future. Although Shelley specifically disavows primitivism at the beginning of the *Ode to Liberty*, his vision of the future world roughly coincides with the golden age of literary tradition. As a fair approximation of Shelley's own concept we may notice a pasage from Book V of *The Faerie Queene*, a section of Spenser's poem with which Shelley was thoroughly familiar. In the Saturnian Age,

All the world with goodnesse did abound:
All loved vertue, no man was affrayed
Of force, ne fraud in wight was to be found:
Ne warre was knowne, ne dreadfull trompets sound,
Peace universall rayn'd mongst men and beasts.
(Proem, 9)

In the minds of both Spenser and Shelley politics is closely allied to ethics. Virtue in the individual will lead to happiness in the state. Both take the Aristotelian position that the best results for mankind can be attained by perfecting the individual in the theory and practice of virtue. It was personal morality in its broader applications that Shelley had in mind when he characterized "a virtuous or moral action" as one "fitted to produce the highest pleasure to the greatest number of sentient beings."

As a young man Shelley stood for action and direct participation. But he very shortly turned to poetry as the most advantageous method of propagating his ethical convictions. "The great instrument of moral good is the imagination. . . Poetry strengthens that faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb." It is on this ground that we may explain the marked predilection for didacticism which is everywhere apparent in Shelley's poetry. As an artist he disliked the preceptorial or disciplinary sermon in verse: to teach, he knew, was not often to delight. "Those in whom the poetical faculty, though great, is less intense, as Euripides, Lucan, Tasso, Spenser, have frequently affected a moral aim, and the effect of their poetry is diminished in exact proportion to the de-

gree in which they compel us to advert to this purpose." But whether Shelley realized it or not, the greater part of his major poetry is didactic, though he chose, like Spenser, to set forth his lessons "clowdily enwrapped in allegorical devises."

We have been looking at Shelley as a moralist and political theorist who believed that it was the high aim of poetry to assist in the regeneration of society by appealing to the moral nature of individual men. It remains to inquire into the nature of his philosophical and religious convictions during the years of his maturity.

Shelley's departure for Italy marked for him the beginning of a new life. By the summer of 1818 he had put away many of his youthful habits of thought, and with the assistance of Plato, Dante, and Spenser, had begun to evolve that cosmic theory which is at once his philosophy and his religion, which dominates all of his mature poetry, and which has been called "the only adequate key to an understanding of his conduct as man and poet." This is his theory of cosmic love, which he sees as a great revivifying power, an inexhaustible force upon which man can draw until, through his efforts, "the golden years return". Following out this line of thought, Shelley began to see that the greatest poets and philosophers of England, Italy, and ancient Greece had celebrated the dominion of Love, not in the narrower sense of sexual passion, but as the one strong force for good in a world where sensuality, despotism, and superstition were enthroned. Gifted with poetic vision, these men had been able to transcend the "dull vapours of the little world of self". Dante's *Paradiso* was thus "a perpetual hymn of everlasting Love". Plato, Ariosto, Tasso, Shakespeare, Spenser, Calderon, and Rousseau had celebrated at successive intervals the dominion of Love, "planting as it were trophies in the human mind of that sublimest victory over sensuality and force", drowning out with the harmonious music of their voices "the dissonance of arms and superstition". It is worth noting that six of the writers named by Shelley belong to the Renaissance, while it is Plato, "alone of all the ancients", to whom Shelley points as a worthy exponent of the doctrine of Love.

The whole of Shelley's major poetry will be best understood as a succession of attempts to clothe this central doctrine with poetic imagery. Queen Mab, the heroines of *Alastor* and *The Revolt*

of *Islam*, and the force which Shelley calls Intellectual Beauty are youthful attempts to epitomize the doctrine towards which Shelley was steadily moving, but did not as yet wholly comprehend. *Prince Athanase*, the earliest of the poems to reflect unmistakably the influence of Plato's *Symposium*, bridges the gap between the *Revolt* and *Prometheus Unbound*. Although the poem was never finished, one of the fragments hymns the spirit of Love in terms which show that Shelley was beginning to discover its presence everywhere in nature.

In that series of heroines which begins with Asia, includes the Witch of Atlas and Emilia of *Epipsychidion*, and terminates with the figure of Urania in *Adonais*, Shelley is able to fix his elusive concept in tangible poetic imagery. All of these demigoddesses are related in one way or another to the Uranian Aphrodite of the *Symposium*, to the figure of Venus in Spenser's Temple of Venus episode, and to the nature-goddess of the Mutability Cantos at the end of *The Faerie Queene*. They represent, together and separately, the great power of Love in nature, without which Mankind is manacled to his rock of suffering by the forces of evil, but with which he can enter the regenerated world of Shelley's golden vision.

Shelley's new vision of the unifying and harmonizing power of Love is predicated upon a farewell to the more or less mechanical materialism of the *Queen Mab* days, and also to the half-hearted Manichaeistic compromise of *The Revolt*. From 1818 onwards his philosophy and his religion are alike informed by his theory of cosmic love. It is the One which remains while the Many change and pass, and Shelley drives the concept home in poem after major poem in the full vigor of his maturity.

Whatever Shelley's limitations as man and poet, he takes his position among those like Plato and the Renaissance Platonists who have celebrated the victory of love over sensuality and force. And his concept links him also to the greatest figure of the Christian tradition, a fact which I think Shelley began somewhat tardily to realize as he approached his thirtieth year.

Such, very hastily enumerated, are Shelley's central convictions, and any fair appraisal of the poet must take them into consideration. If Shelley was guilty of extra-marital relations, we shall hardly wish to condone them or to explain them away,

and we always stick at his treatment of Harriet. But it is the inherent and inescapable tragedy of men everywhere that their better selves are not always in the ascendancy, and that they know better than they do. To fall short of an ideal is hardly to merit the accusation of insanity.

We can, indeed, bury the mad Shelley and the angelic Shelley and wish that it had been done sooner. It will profit us little, on the other hand, to button the poet into a denim shirt and make him an accomplice before the fact of Marxism. Shelley's worth lies finally in his poetic achievement. The Shelley who will live and reach the ears of successive generations is a thoroughly sane and serious artist, with remarkable powers of lyrical expression, and strong personal convictions about the cause and cure of evil in man's physical and spiritual environment.

by William S. Knickerbocker

BORDER AND BAR

REVISED INTERPRETATIONS OF SIR WALTER SCOTT

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S status as an acknowledged, but unread, Great Author—the possible fate of his continuing to be a frozen classic—is being corrected by some readjustments of critical approach. As was to be expected, the 1932 centenary of his death brought forth the usual celebrative spate of essays which blandly repeated many stylized opinions of his character and achievement. It also, however, initiated a debate concerning his literary worth which resulted in a new orientation. From both homage and detraction emerged distinct traces of a refocused Scott in John Buchan's engaging biography of the Wizard of the North, and in Professor H. J. C. Grierson's definitive edition of Scott's *LETTERS*.

Three subsequent books contribute to this revised interpretation; Mr. James T. Hillhouse's *THE WAVERLEY NOVELS AND THEIR CRITICS*, Mr. Edwin Muir's *SCOTT AND SCOTLAND*, and Miss Christabel F. Fiske's *EPIC SUGGESTION IN THE IMAGERY OF THE WAVERLEY NOVELS*. Mr. Hillhouse supplies an indispensable survey of critical opinion on Scott since 1814. Mr. Muir proposes a radically new interpretation, portraying Scott as the pathetic victim of a culturally impoverished and frustrated Scotland; while Miss Fiske argues that Scott was not entirely a "romantic" because his novels reveal "epic" (or impersonally objective) suggestions in his imitations of phrasal and rhetorical patterns established by recognized classics.

Mr. Hillhouse's *THE WAVERLEY NOVELS AND THEIR CRITICS*¹ is a discursive historical sketch of accumulated corpus of criticism of Scott. It illuminates both an important phase of the English

¹*THE WAVERLEY NOVELS AND THEIR CRITICS*. By James T. Hillhouse. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. 1936. Pp. 357. \$3.50.

Novel during the last century and the history of Victorian sensibility in its response to Scott, supplementing Frederick T. Blanchard's *FIELDING THE NOVELIST* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), by making clear the reasons why Scott displaced Fielding in Victorian esteem. "Nor should it be forgotten," wrote Mr. Hillhouse, "that a novelist's private life had to be taken into account. Here of course Scott shone refulgent beside Fielding. His morals were blameless, he was a gentleman, he was successful, kings had delighted to honor him—he was in every way admirable. Fielding's life had been anything but edifying (so far as they knew) and Thackeray's picture of him made him more shocking than ever. Altogether, the substitution of Scott for Fielding as king of the novelists, what Mr. Blanchard calls 'the Scott heresy', is not at all surprising."

What definitely emerges from Mr. Hillhouse's periscope retrospect is that critics of Scott have had considerable difficulty in arriving at some unanimous estimate, apart from their agreement that the earlier novels—those depicting Scottish life and character—are more permanently engaging than the purely historical romances like *IVANHOE*, and the highly decent character of his personal life. Made a classic during his lifetime, chiefly through Lord Jeffrey's sanction handsomely bestowed after the public had enthusiastically approved, Scott was completely canonized in Lockhart's *LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT*. By converting an Author into a Hero, Lockhart consummated what Jeffrey began, and withstood the decline of popular interest in Scott's novels during the late nineteenth century.

That decline was caused by a shift in sensibility, largely effected by Victorian, and later by French and Russian novelists. Dickens and Thackeray, each in his own mode, zealously converted the novel into an instrument of social and humanitarian reform, followed by George Eliot, Meredith, and Hardy who made it a vehicle of ethical and psychological analysis. By 1880, the concept of the novel as "light reading" gave way to foreign advances in the technique of the novel. Scott's works increasingly became neglected and were regarded as mere relics of hallowed memory by "advanced readers". "The French (and Henry James)," wrote

²Hillhouse, p. 196.

Mr. Hillhouse, "had discovered the technic of writing novels. They had found out how to make the novel neat and compact; they had devised all sorts of subtle tricks to use in the management of plot and the analysis of character." As a result, "Scott suffered not only from the new ideas of what the novel should contain and how it should be written, but also from the fading of his personal appeal." ". . . Beside the novelists of the new school [he was] . . . formless and chaotic, amateurish and naïve in technic, and . . . obviously wrote most of the time by the page or even the chapter, having never heard of *le mot juste*."

Mr. Hillhouse does not write an obituary of Scott's popular appeal though he almost does. Before he himself was led to investigate the fluctuation of Scott's literary reputation he had "no special interest in the novels or in Sir Walter himself"; even after laborious research which included reading all of the novels, he was still "not able to rouse much enthusiasm over the more remote romances. . ." Aware of public apathy to Scott, he apologetically describes himself as at best "a partisan", unable to surmount the critical analysis of Scott established by Carlyle, Walter Bagehot, and Leslie Stephen—"all three of them landmarks and points of orientation," as Mr. Hillhouse notes.¹ Carlyle's essay was, he says, "the most damning of the three" and "may well have done much to nurture the personal tradition of Scott which was so important to the continuance of his fame."

Neither the Victorians nor Mr. Hillhouse resolved the critical dilemma caused by Carlyle's sharp condemnation of Scott's novels and his concomitant praise of the personal Scott. Carlyle brusquely dismissed the novels with: "Not profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for edification. . . the sick heart will find no healing here, the darkly struggling heart no guidance, the Heroic that is in all men no divine awakening voice." Against this, he set his homage for Sir Walter himself: "a right brave man. . . a most composed, invincible man; in difficulty and distress knowing no discouragement. . . a most robust, healthy man. . . No sounder piece of

¹Carlyle's essay on Scott first appeared in the *WESTMINSTER REVIEW* of January, 1838 (28:154), and is now accessible in the Scribner (1899) edition of Carlyle, *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, Vol IV. Bagehot's essay appeared in the *NATIONAL REVIEW*, 6:444 (April, 1858).

Leslie Stephen's essay appeared in *CORNHILL*, 24:278 (September, 1871), collected in *Hours in a Library*.

British Manhood was put together in that eighteenth century of Time. Alas, his fine Scotch face with its shaggy honesty, sagacity and goodness." Carlyle's sharp distinction between Scott and his works persisted, though obscured in efforts by essayists to appraise the novels by their admiration of the man in sentiments like that of Bayard Tuckerman in 1892: "The purity of thought which pervades all of his writings, the never failing nobility of the views of life which he placed before his readers, can have no other than an elevating influence." Not until Professor Grierson published his essay, "Scott and Carlyle" in 1928 was Carlyle's issue bravely faced. Summarizing Mr. Grierson's refutation of Carlyle, Mr. Hillhouse wrote:

Possibly the most systematic examination of Carlyle's essay, including the personal motives underlying it, is that of Professor Grierson, who analyzes Carlyle's strictures one by one to show that they may all be answered, and who also emphasizes the fact that Carlyle, temperamentally bitter and melancholy, could hardly speak kindly of any successful person because of his own long wait for success. In addition, Mr. Grierson points out that Carlyle was in most ways unfitted to sympathize with Scott, not only because of his general moral earnestness but because of such matters as his Presbyterianism, toward which Scott was at least cool, while Carlyle saw in it the most poetical quality of Scotland. And yet, Mr. Grierson says, Scott could see the whole country steeped in poetry.

But Professor Grierson's systematic examination of Carlyle's indictment was, for all of its courageous facing of a persisting issue, at best only a *tu quoque*. Its chief contribution was to bring to clear focus the dilemma Carlyle had raised: it stressed the existence of an *impasse* in critical opinion of Scott.

Although Mr. Edwin Muir's *SCOTT AND SCOTLAND*¹ was not written primarily to solve Carlyle's dilemma and thereby break the *impasse*, its interpretation of Scott in relation to his regional culture significantly contributes to that effect. Mr. Muir radically

¹H. J. C. Grierson, "Scott and Carlyle", *ESSAYS AND STUDIES*, The English Association (London) 1928.

²*SCOTT AND SCOTLAND*. By Edwin Muir. New York: Robert Speller Publishing Corporation. 1938. Pp. 182. \$2.00.

shifts consideration of Scott to an entirely different context. Armed with the information supplied by Mr. Hillhouse, the reader of Mr. Muir's book may discern the disjunction by considering Mr. Muir's statement of his problem in the light of Carlyle's abrupt dismissal of Scott's novels. "The riddle which confronted me in appraising Scott himself, . . . was to account for a curious emptiness which I felt behind the wealth of his imagination. . . . I was forced to account for the hiatus in Scott's endowment by considering the environment in which he lived, by invoking the fact . . . that he spent most of his days in a hiatus, in a country, that is to say, which was neither a nation or a province. . . . Scott, in other words, lived in a community which was not a community, and set himself to carry on a tradition which was not a tradition and the result was an exact reflection of his predicament."

This bold interpretation obviously manifests dissent from traditional views of Scott and, by considering him in the light of his regional status, initiates an orientation quite different from that of the Victorians. Its sociological slant shows Scott in a painful predicament. "Nature endowed him," said Mr. Muir, "with a genius universal in scope. Scotland provided a body of heroic legend for that genius to work upon. But it could not give him a complete frame work of living experience on which to nourish his powers and exercise them; . . . it could not give him a basis for the profound criticism of life of which there is no doubt that he was capable. . . . But instead . . . he had to fall back on legend, and so his novels consist . . . of flesh and blood and pasteboard." Psychoanalysis is brought into play to account for what Mr. Muir sees as the "hiatus" in Scott: he reveals Scott in a peculiarly modern light; "modern" in the sense that he is discovered to have been a genius with a divided mind, whose literary productions are baroque in their agglomerations because Scott was caught in a cultural riptide described in the ebbing of Scottish, and the incoming flow of English, culture. "The hiatus between cause and effect in Scott's novels," Mr. Muir emphasizes, "the imperviousness of his heroes to the consequences of their actions, cannot be explained, I think, except by the fact that he was born and brought up in a sort of vacuum, a country without a center which could gather up within itself and give meaning to all the actions

of the people who composed it." Scott obviously, as Mr. Muir depicts him, faithfully reflected his environment: yet the cause of his literary deficiencies is not entirely its emptiness: it is also also his failure apparently to take a definite stand. Mr. Muir sees Scott as a novelist who passionately absorbed Border legends in his insatiable youth but who later, in young manhood, became equally absorbed in the study of law, so that there resulted a clash of allegiances in his mind, of unreconciled loyalties, which heavily told upon his efforts in fiction. He never succeeded, Mr. Muir implies, in reconciling a vivacious and disorderly imagination, fed and stimulated by legends of Border exploits, with the restraining checks of social order enjoined by the discipline of his legal studies. "The incompatibility between his allegiance to Scotland and the past he was rooted in, and the England of the rootless present . . . was finally insoluble. So the form of his approximate solution was the story of adventure." But this solution was inadequate, thinks Mr. Muir, for it "permitted indulgence in lawlessness" in Scott's novels, revealing "his concession to Scotland's claims, now become illegal—followed by the sober imposition of law—his acknowledgement of England's right and the right of the established order."

Mr. Muir's new and radical interpretation of Scott patently betrays the fallacy of "regionalist" criticism of literature. Suggestive as his interpretation of Scott is, it distorts Scott to serve the directive purposes of Mr. Muir's private program for Scottish regionalism. It misleads because it intervenes with a previously developed doctrine, importing into Scott's mind and work concepts which Scott's novels or biographical sources do not corroborate. Scott's "regionalism" was more faithfully expressed by Miss Fiske's "geometric metaphor": more faithful, because it was derived from Scott himself and not superposed upon him. The basic fallacy of Mr. Muir's ingenious interpretation lies in his misinterpreting Scott's own judgement upon himself: "What a life mine has been!, half-educated, almost wholly neglected or left to myself, stuffing my mind with the most nonsensical trash." This is not, as Mr. Muir would have it, the expression of blank misgivings of a mind moving in worlds unrealized—the abject admission of bewilderment of a frustrated man, of one torn by divided allegiances. It is, rather, the mature judgement of the

Bar upon the Border: the criticism on himself by one, ripened by the ardors of experience, who passed severe sentence for the absence of discipline in his formative years. Scott did not love his native land less because he accepted the historical union of Scotland and England as a political fact which required an imaginative consummation by way of cultural supplement. When Mr. Muir says that in *Old Mortality*, *The Heart of Midlothian* and *Redgauntlet*, "Scott is working out his conflicting allegiances to Scotland and England", he can reach only the conclusion that since the union had been an historical fact over a century, Scott's nostalgia for an irrecoverable Scottish independence was "inevitably romantic in the bad sense": the nostalgia was futile, and the futility resulted in "bad romanticism". But a re-reading of the novels named does not confirm Mr. Muir's melancholy contention.

Miss Fiske's *EPIC SUGGESTION IN THE IMAGERY OF THE WAVERLEY NOVELS*⁴ presents as its main contention "that the epic element in Scott's novels [has] been greatly neglected in criticism in favor of the romantic." Because of its microscopic scrutiny and technical restriction of treatment to Scott's Augustan conformity to conventionalized rhetoric, it challenges the traditional notion of Scott's romanticism. It is a heavily labored thesis, sagging under excessive documentation which, however, though it demonstrates Miss Fiske's contention, fails to develop some preliminary comments on Scott's filial loyalties made in the introduction.

Though the book is badly organized as a whole, showing little logical connection between its introduction, central section of four chapters, and its concluding chapter, Miss Fiske makes important contributions to a more adequate view of Scott. She dodges exact definition of her pivotal word, "epic", leaving one to gather that it means conformity to recognized formalisms of rhetoric, sanctioned by the best textbooks. Her correlations of Scott's figures of speech with those in Homer, the Bible, and in Scandinavian literature might suggest to an ungracious reader the suspicion that Scott was a conscious—perhaps too conscious—pupil of the approved masters of rhetoric in his servile conformity. The suspicion is

⁴*EPIC SUGGESTION IN THE IMAGERY OF THE WAVERLEY NOVELS*. By Christabel F. Fiske. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1940. Pp. 141. \$2.50.

confirmed by a chance remark of Scott himself who, in *Waverley*, naïvely commented on an elaborated (but original) simile thus: "This simile so much corresponds with the state of Waverley's feeling . . . that I prefer it (especially as being, I trust, wholly original) to any more splendid illustration, with which Byshe's *Art of Poetry* might supply me." Miss Fiske neglects to inform her readers how far Scott depended upon Byshe's *Art of Poetry* for what she considers to be his "epic suggestions". Instead, she ruthlessly and relentlessly pursues her standardized categories of rhetoric for four chapters which are severely regimented. A concluding fifth chapter arrives at something else: that if Scott were living today, he would be all for human brotherhood. This edifying conclusion seems curiously irrelevant to her thesis. Indeed, Miss Fiske's documentation of Scott's rhetoric in no way anticipates the points asserted in her conclusion.

When Miss Spurgeon showed the correlation of Shakespeare's imagery with his view of life, she assumed that Shakespeare was original in his figures of speech; because the images issued from his personal vision they intimately revealed the forces that shaped his world. In marked contrast Miss Fiske only succeeds in demonstrating that Scott was a faithful copyist of conventionalized rhetoric: that his literary artifices are evidences of his skill in imitation. Her imposing parades of Scott's orthodox verbal patterns do not organically develop the rich suggestions of her section in her Introduction, "Scott's Favorable Geographic Situation" (pp. XXIII-XXIV). If there is any nexus between those introductory comments and the Conclusion of the book, it is probably in a "geometric metaphor", based upon a quotation from *Rob Roy*; a metaphor of concentric circles indicating the inverse ratio of Scott's social affections: "outside circle, love of country; second circle, love of province, village, clan; first [or innermost] circle, love of family to ninth generation." This meta-

²⁴"It is within these limits that a Scotchman's social affection expends itself, till the means of discharging itself in the interior circles have been exhausted. It is within these circles that his heart throbs, each sensation being fainter and fainter till, beyond the widest boundary, it is almost unfelt." *Rob Roy*, I, p. 268. Quoted by Miss Fiske, p. 78. I beg to demur that this quotation does not bear out Miss Fiske's contention that if Scott were living today, he would be all for human brotherhood. If I read the quotation rightly, Scott's widest circle would stop at love of his own country, or diminish in intensity in the outer rim of universal humanity.

phor makes Miss Fiske's contribution of prime importance. Her gesture is also valuable in the revision of Scott criticism because it significantly fixes attention upon Scott's modes of expression.

Scholarship here again breaks ground for criticism because an adequate estimate of Scott necessitates verifiable scrutiny of his creative methods, unhampered by the deflections of iconolatry, or by the distractions of those who, like Mr. Muir, propose ingenious speculations to account for Scott's special literary traits. Whereas Mr. Muir sees Scott as a baffled author, paralyzed in true creativeness because of the decay of his native regionalist tradition, Miss Fiske describes him, in her Introduction, as one who enjoyed a "favorable geographic situation". . . "a situation in which a virile but less civilized race comes into contact with one more advanced culturally." She sees Scott as the product of a cultural collision epitomized in the conflict of English law against the wayward impulses of Scottish Borderers. "Thus do we see in the *Waverley* Novels," says Miss Fiske (p. XXV), "Law with a capital letter encroaching upon domain of hundreds of little household lares bristling vengefully, each on his own particular hearth, at any injury involving the family safety or honor."

II

For those who prefer the savor of seasoned art in historical fiction, the observation made by a Victorian critic in 1891 on the publication of Scott's *Journal* is obviously negligible: "We can reverence Scott's memory and pity his foibles . . . but we can no longer regard him with the fetish-worship which made our grandfathers and grandmothers blind to his shortcomings." Aware of his "shortcomings", as Mr. Muir amply indicates, mature readers may be aware of a peculiar and rewarding quality in Scott and his novels which corrects in some measure Carlyle's devastating observations. They may take Mr. Muir's symbol of the Border (representing the impulsive exploits of wayward derring-do) and its dialectic opposite, the symbol of the Bar, or magistrate (representing the regimen of an ordered social life by the restraints of Law) but find that, in place of Mr. Muir's view of the irreconciled conflict of Border and Bar in Scott and his works, the symbols were harmonized before the publication of *Waverley*; that

this harmony excited him to write it, and that it guided his powers for the rest of the novels.

The prevailing notion that Scott's novels now only interest boys, or, as Mr. Muir puts it, that they are merely stories of adventure, is open to challenge. Whatever else they may be, who would contend that they can compete with work by other novelists in the same field: with that of Maurice Hewlett, Anthony Hope, or Rafael Sabatini—to say nothing of G. A. Henty? Who, having a taste for rapid action and dramatic dialogue, would prefer Scott's novels? To those who are addicted to literary cocktails in the form of historical fiction Scott must seem tediously dull and long-winded. But, fortunately, there are readers who relish narratives which issue from an author's brooding imagination, the pleasure of which is intensified by the narrator's delight in discursiveness. Scott is leisurely reading, to be sure, yet his discursiveness is never windy: it is "tedious" only to impatient readers, incapable of delight in Scott's art of calculated delays in ruminative reflection, descriptions of characters and scenery, and in historical exposition.

Traditional criticism of Scott has had its effects in making up, and perhaps closing, the public mind, in preventing it from seeing him afresh. Having failed to bridge the gap between the man and his works, critics have further damaged Scott's claim to attention by not seeing the *Waverley Novels* in the light of their author's frequently declared purpose. One may concede that Scott is feeble in character analysis, that his sense of causal sequence in event is evanescent, that his expository digressions betray the absence of a preconceived plot, and yet, at the same time, find that he achieved his creative intention within his self-confessed—if not self-imposed—limitations. The rightness of his artistic instinct becomes clearer the more the entire series of his novels is seen in its historic context and the more that total work is revealed in its connections, book with book in order of composition and correlated to his statements of purpose declared in his prefaces, his letters, and his *Journal*. Traditional criticism of Scott has faltered because the preliminary industry of scholarship, working in this method with available materials, has not been accessible. As a result, traditional criticism has fluctuated about several discreet nodes, leaving Scott in blurred focus. What does

not seem to have occurred to Scott's critics is that he meant what he said in declaring his purpose was only "to amuse": obviously therefore, they have not inquired why he wanted only to amuse nor what he meant by "amusement". Nor does it appear that they have discerned that Scott experimented with the novel form as a vehicle to develop imaginatively for picturesque effects the heroic and pastoral qualities of social history. By neglecting Scott's declarations of purpose, traditional criticism assumed that he did not know what he was about.

But Scott did know what he was about. Conscious of deviations from the practice of his predecessors in the structure of the novel, Scott plainly indicated in his *Lives of the Novelists* that though "novels may sometimes instruct the youthful mind by real pictures of life and sometimes awaken their better feelings and sympathies by strains of generous sentiment and tales of fictitious woe, beyond this point they are a mere elegance, a luxury contrived for the amusement of polished life." Scott's own novels are themselves "elegant", fulfilling the conditions of what constituted the "luxury contrived for . . . amusement" Perceiving the taste of aristocratic contemporaries, Scott experimentally wrote his series of novels, faithfully catering to his public until he became almost its abject servant. "I care not who knows it," he wrote in the preface to *Nigel*, "I write for general amusement", and in the same valedictory, published the year before his death, he summarized his mode of working as a kind of final retort to obtuse critics:

A poor fellow like myself, weary with ransacking his own barren and bounded imagination, looks for some general subject in the huge and boundless field of history, which holds forth examples of every kind—lights on some personage, or some combination of circumstances, or some striking trait of manners, which he thinks may be advantageously used as a basis of fictitious narrative—bedizens it with such coloring as his skill suggests—ornaments it with romantic circumstances as may heighten the general effect—invests it with such shades of character as will best contrast it with each other—and thinks, perhaps, he has done some service to the public, if he can present to them a lively fictitious picture, for which the original anecdote or circumstance which he made free to press into his service only furnished a slight sketch.

His concept of an imaginative treatment of history as an instrument of "amusement" is shown in that excerpt. Excepting Macaulay, his contemporaries who were competent historians excited themselves by pointing out his anachronisms and historical inaccuracies, and began the conventional depreciation of Scott as an historian, themselves oblivious to the distinctions between poetic constructions in fiction and verifiable historiography. His deficiencies in plot worried other critics to whom he retorted in the First Preface to *The Antiquary* in which he stated his main concern in writing *Waverley* and *Guy Mannering*! "I have been more solicitous to describe manners minutely, than to arrange in any case an artificial and combined narrative and have but to regret that I have felt myself unable to unite these two requisites of a good novel." His guiding purpose was to make the cultural consummation of the Union of Scotland and England through a sympathetic depiction of Scottish "manners", or regional loyalties and customs. To achieve this purpose in his novels, he rightly held his own regional affections in severe restraint and deliberately wrote in a spirit to "amuse" his English readers, to woo their sympathy for Scottish differences of custom and character, and, above all, not to alienate their understanding. If this prevailing and guiding purpose did not find adequate form until *The Heart of Midlothian*, the reason probably is that Scott did not inherit from earlier novelists a suitable form, and had, from trial-and-error efforts, to devise one to fit his special purpose.

In *Waverley* and the subsequent Scottish Novels, Scott elected himself mediator of Scotland to England by interpreting the Border way of life, and simultaneously the mediator of England to Scotland by providing his fellow-Scots with sympathetic interpretations of the dignity and orderliness of English life in characters like *Waverley* and *Guy Mannering*. His sense of *the moment*, in Taine's usage of the phrase, is illustrated by *Waverley* (1814) which was published in the year of the interval between Elba and Waterloo: at a time, that is to say, when the curbing of Napoleon resulted in a temporary relaxation, in a distinct let-down in emotional tension. The sub-title of *Waverley* ("Tis Sixty Years Since") indicates that the interval between the time of the novel's action and that of publication was to Scott something of a cultural blank in Scotland: yet to concede that point to

Mr. Muir does not concede the use he makes of it. In selecting the time of action, Scott isolated the moment of Scotland's last military assertion of her national separateness, the moment which preceded the gradual widening of the chasm which resulted in English ignorance of, or intelligent interest in, Scottish patriarchal society and its peculiarities of customs. Boswell's *A Journal to the Hebrides* doubtless had had its effect in fixing English notions of Scotland with its unflattering references. *Waverley* was a corrective in its sympathetic and faithful depiction of Scottish "manners" and scenery. Conversely, it was a corrective of the growing influence of English Whiggism which had flowered in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and in the founding of *The Edinburgh Review*. Scott's Toryism resisted the Whig doctrines of progress, individualistic competition, and commercial prosperity. It was not openly advocated in *Waverley* but it nevertheless shaped the novel's philosophical implications. It was more congenial to his cultural patrimony of loyalty to Scottish traditions providing the enlarging frame of a sympathetic political philosophy of conservatism. Hence the absence of conflict in *Waverley*, either in the characters described or in psychoanalytical revelations of the novelist himself. *Waverley* and its successors were therefore relieved of the irritations and acerbities which the conflict of impulse and law are likely to engender in those writers, like Carlyle, who fail to regulate their instincts by their concepts. Alas, that Carlyle could praise Scott himself for his placidity and condemn his novels because they were also placid—not apocalyptic! The placidity of the works reflect the placidity of the man.

But the question may still be asked: wherein lies Scott's continued fascination for matured readers? The historical consideration of his mediation between Scotland and England may have its appeal, but it is at best only a slight one: it is not a convincing reason why anyone should read him today. Nor is his realistic and amiable depiction of Scottish character and custom likely to enlist modern readers. The necessity that prompted it has passed. Perhaps Scott's primary attraction for a reader today lies somewhere in the general region indicated by the gesture of Miss Fiske's book on Scott's epic suggestions. Signs are every-

where present of a renewed interest in the civilized use of language. Perhaps Scott's undying power lies less in the structure and incidents of his novels than in the effects he creates by his sustained dignity and variations of his style. "No other English novelist," Lord David Cecil has written, "is both so variously and so powerfully gifted" and stressed the point that Scott's "power of eloquence is his supreme title to fame."

Perhaps this is as Scott himself would have it, were he living today. For eloquence is elegance in language. If Scott wrote with elegant dignity, his reason—apart from the historical fact that he wrote as a gentleman for gentleman—is that his stately narratives served "to amuse", to calm the passions, to alleviate disturbed emotions, and to placate the reader's imagination, relieving it of too severe exactions of reflective analysis while filling it with the amplitude of structured language. His dramatic anaemia, which so markedly contrasts with Jane Austen's telegraphic pungency, tells against him only with those who insist arbitrarily upon economy and swiftness of effect. To seasoned readers, however, Scott's "diffuseness" is the musical staff or frame of a ruminative narrative. Such readers see the Waverley Novels issuing from a richly endowed temperament, verbally opulent; an opulence justified by its resulting delight in language well manipulated. The controlled mode of Scott's writing keeps characters and incidents in happy equipoise, achieving a healthy *catharsis* of excitement by the novelist's delays through judicious exposition. His deliberate spacing of dialogue and incident with scenery description and auctorial comment secures a disruption of contingency which satisfies by easing a mind overburdened with contemporary anxieties. The style of the Waverley Novels awakens and sustains a placid mood through the medium of mannered sentences which evoke a spirit of calm and confidence very nearly akin to the epic—as distinguished from the immediately and intensely tragic—sense of life.

by *Thomas P. Govan*

SLAVERY AND THE CIVIL WAR

THE economic interpretation of history was not brought into American thought by the teachings of Karl Marx but it is to be found as an integral part of the thinking of our earliest political theorists—Madison, Hamilton, and John Taylor of Caroline, among others. The influence of these men was negligible on the first group of scientific historians who began writing in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The implication of their teachings was not realized until the early years of the present century; but, since then, there has been a growing tendency among historians to explain political and social actions in economic terms, and to seek the origin of all conflicts in the material circumstances of the life of the people of the nation.

This economic interpretation has, on the whole, led to a better and more complete understanding of American history; but it has also, through over-emphasis, caused some distortion; particularly in regard to the slavery controversy and the Civil War. Taking a simplified view of the economy of the United States before 1860, historians have falsely pictured an industrial East in conflict with an Agrarian¹ South and West. The anti-slavery movement, in this interpretation, was not a moral crusade but a shrewd trick by "Yankee" industrialists to separate the two agricultural regions, and the resulting Civil War was a revolution ending in the triumph of the bourgeoisie over the feudal landlords of the South and the independent farmers of the West.

The above over-simplification of the elaborate argument used to justify this view of the Civil War is necessary if the essentially naïve economic determinism on which it is based is to be exposed.

¹"Agrarian" is used here in its modern sense as the equivalent of agricultural. It should be remembered, however, that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries "agrarian" was applied only to the radical group who advocated an equal division of the land or the products of the land, and most of those to whom it is now applied would have denied that they were agrarians.

And it is the growing influence of this theory which gives particular importance to the publication this year of four books, three interpretive and one a factual study of Southern thought,² all denying by implication or explicitly its central thesis. None of these writers denies the validity of the economic interpretation of history. On the contrary, all find in the material and psychological environment the source of the ideas that move men to action. All, I think, would agree that it was the essential nature of capitalism, with its need for free markets and a free labor supply, that was responsible for the condemnation of slavery and unfree labor wherever it existed; but that once the condemnation had been accepted, it began to exert an independent influence, so that individuals who acted upon it were motivated not by economic interest but by genuine moral fervor.

Ralph Gabriel's book is subtitled "An Intellectual History since 1815", and his chapters on the Civil War and Southern thought, while of great importance, are but incidental to the larger work. It is his contention that the nation created by the American Revolution, the Constitution of 1787, and the War of 1812, was sustained during the years of its growth to maturity by a national faith in a romantic conception of Democracy "which, though unrecognized as such, had the power of a State religion." The ideas upon which this faith was based came from diverse sources but all could be classified roughly under the four headings of a belief in a moral law, established by God, fundamental and permanent; in the free individual; in the philosophy of progress; and in the mission of America.

These basic postulates are to be found in the thought of most Americans after 1815 and constitute the unifying theme of American intellectual history and of the American nation. Individuals varying as widely as John C. Calhoun and Matthew Carey, Mr.

²Ralph Henry Gabriel, *THE COURSE OF AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC THOUGHT*. 452 pp. New York: The Ronald Press Company. \$4.00.

Dwight L. Dumond, *ANTI-SLAVERY ORIGINS OF THE CIVIL WAR IN THE UNITED STATES*. 143 pp. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press. \$2.00.

Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *THE COURSE OF THE SOUTH TO SECESSION, AN INTERPRETATION*, edited by E. Merton Coulter. 176 pp. New York: for the American Historical Association by D. Appleton-Century Company. \$2.50.

Clement Eaton, *FREEDOM OF THOUGHT IN THE OLD SOUTH*. 343 pp. Durham: Duke University Press. \$3.00.

Justice Oliver W. Holmes and Mr. Justice Stephen Field, Ralph Waldo Emerson and William James, Andrew Carnegie and Henry George, conscious only of their differences and conflicts, were in substantial agreement upon these fundamental assumptions.

Geography and a common government alone cannot create a nation. "Nationalism is a sentiment;" Gabriel says, "It is a consciousness of the group, a feeling in the heart of the individual that his fate is inextricably bound up with those of his people." The democratic faith was the sentiment which gave to the nation what Whitman called "adhesiveness" and enabled it "to counteract the disruptive tendencies which, if unchecked, sometimes destroy group coherence." But democracy was more than a sentiment; it was a religion with a ritual and symbols. The symbols have changed, Washington and the Declaration of Independence have become of less importance, Lincoln and the Constitution of more; but the American democratic faith has remained essentially the same.

Its ideas fit into a coherent pattern which is closely related to the realistic democracy of actual political practice. "Realistic democracy provides a middle-of-the-road solution for problems which arise from conflicts or pressure groups. Its method is give-and-take. Its normal solutions are compromises. Extreme solutions are rare. The American democratic faith is a pattern of ideals providing standards of value with which the accomplishments of a realistic democracy may be judged. The democratic faith is the fruit of an effort to harmonize the potentially antagonistic doctrines of the fundamental law, the free individual, and nationalism. When the doctrine of the fundamental law is carried to the extreme, the result is fatalistic determinism denying individual liberty. Individual liberty, pushed to its logical end, becomes anarchy. Extreme nationalism produces the deadening regimentation of totalitarianism. The American democratic faith is a system of checks and balances in the realm of ideas. It asserts the possibility of a balance between liberty and authority, between the self-expression of the free individual and the necessary coercion of the organized group. The democratic faith is, then, in essence, a philosophy of the mean. It proclaims that, within broad limits of an ordered nature, man is master of his destiny."

Gabriel is himself a product of this democratic faith. Only

rarely does he assert his own beliefs, but each time it is an affirmation, tentative in statement, of the essence of the doctrine. It is this faith in democracy that sets the tone of the book. He does not believe that any man or any men have all the answers. There is room for divergence of opinion, and it is only out of the clash of interests and views that accessible and applicable, never absolute, truth and justice come. He has all the qualities of a great historian because he understands the circumstances out of which the apparent conflicts between Americans have arisen. He is neither a Jeffersonian nor a Hamiltonian; but the partisans of these schools cannot quarrel at his presentation of their argument. It is in this that he differs from Vernon Parrington, whose *MAIN CURRENTS OF AMERICAN THOUGHT* alone precedes the present work in this field.

For the first time a "liberal" historian has made an adequate and sympathetic analysis of the economic and political thought of Matthew and Henry Carey and Henry Clay, followers of Hamilton and precursors of Simon Patten and the New Dealers. These men too frequently have been accused of being mere representatives of the privileged few and of the special interests, when in reality the American System they advocated was a humanistic denial of the cold determinism of the Malthusian law of population. They saw the limitations of the agricultural economy of the United States. Only in a "mature and complex society could the democratic ideal of the free individual be realized." For this reason they "would use the State to create a new and more complex economic order. When all the nations of the world had achieved maturity and a rough equality. . . economic nationalism would have served its purpose and world-wide free trade would be the appropriate international arrangement." But only then; for under the circumstances of the first half of the nineteenth century, free-trade would have subordinated the economy of the United States to that of England. Thus the American System was an economic nationalism for the benefit of the whole nation, not of any single class.

The book is written so modestly that its truly revolutionary character is seldom obvious. The independence of Gabriel's thought, his freedom from preconceptions, and the soundness of his historical scholarship can be ascertained only by comparison

with the work of other historians, never from his own statements. This is particularly true in regard to his analysis of Calhoun, and it is purely coincidental that so many of his conclusions are substantiated by these other writers whose books, devoted more particularly to the South and the Civil War, have been published at the same time.

Calhoun was an American nationalist despite the fact that "as an old man he seemed to his enemies to personify sectional intransigence", and he believed in the fundamental postulates of the democratic faith. At the same time he was firmly convinced of the biological and racial inferiority of the Negro. In this he was in agreement with most of his fellow citizens, North and South, both before and after the Civil War. For the Negro has constituted a caste separate and discriminated against at all times and in all sections of the United States. (This is not the place to discuss the morality of this attitude, which is, of course, as Gabriel says, "a denial of the spirit of the American faith", founded on force "as only a makeshift solution for a problem which is without solution.")

Calhoun and almost every other *ante-bellum* Southerner did not "see how civilization could be preserved, if the discipline of slavery were relaxed." The fear of insurrection may have been "unreasonable", as stated by Clement Eaton, but it nevertheless existed almost continually from the time of the Santo Domingo massacre. This fear of the Negro and the belief in his basic inferiority were the fundamental reasons for the Southern defense of slavery, not, merely the fact that the institution was profitable. This conclusion, so contrary to the accepted view, is held by all four writers who express it in almost identical language. Ulrich Phillips says, "Slavery was instituted not merely to provide control of labor but also as a system of racial adjustment and social order." Dwight Dumond: "Slavery as an economic system was of small account compared with slavery as a system of racial adjustment and social control." Eaton: "More important than any economic influence arising from the invention of the cotton gin was the feeling that slavery was needed to control the blacks, to make them work, to prevent crime, and to keep the South 'a white man's country'." And Gabriel: "Slavery was more than the solution of

the economic problem of finding a supply of laborers. It was also the solution of a race problem. It was a social discipline which enabled two unlike races to live together."

Southerners believed that the inferiority of the Negro was a part of the fundamental law, natural and religious, and they thought that the race could be kept in a subordinate position in society only through the institution of slavery. They knew from their own experience that most slave-holders were not cruel masters and that most slaves were not discontented, but they were fearful of the results of emancipation. At the same time there was developing in the non-slaveholding states a conviction, as Dumond express it, "that slavery was not only morally wrong, but was contrary to the principles on which the nation was established" as set forth in the Declaration of Independence.

These two conflicting moral ideas could be held without danger by two geographical sections in the same nation only so long as action was not taken upon them. Jefferson and most of the eighteenth century leaders of the South were convinced that slavery was on its way to gradual extinction. The progress of emancipation in the Northern states substantiated this belief, but the Missouri controversy cast doubt upon its correctness. This first challenge to the spread of slavery was met vigorously, and with it, according to Phillips, "the strident phase of the slavery question" was begun. The decisive refusal of Virginia to consider emancipation in 1832 after the Nat Turner insurrection was another indication of the vitality of the institution. This was accompanied by the failure of the American Colonization Society either to accomplish its purpose or to enlist the support of the United States or any of the Southern states. In 1833 R. R. Gurley, general secretary of this Society, wrote, "If it be once understood that the South designs to *perpetuate* slavery, the whole North will be speedily organized into Anti-Slavery societies, and the whole land will be flooded with anti-slavery publications."

He proved an able prophet. Two years later, 1835, James G. Birney, a Kentucky-born Alabama planter who had become an agent of the colonization society because of his opposition to slavery, virtually announced his conversion to abolitionism when he said, "that slavery should cease in order that freedom may be preserved to any portion of our land. The antagonist principles

of liberty and slavery have been roused into action and one or the other must be victorious. There will be no cessation of the strife until slavery shall be exterminated or liberty destroyed." Lincoln and the other anti-slavery politicians were eventually converted to this point of view, but it was not held generally in the free states until secession which, according to Gabriel, appeared "to be not merely an effort to destroy the Republic, but to overthrow the principles upon which it was founded."

As the various groups in the North were convinced that the South intended to maintain slavery they moved from a passive condemnation of the institution to active efforts to end it. This took many forms: some contented themselves with passing resolutions and signing petitions to Congress, but others attempted to excite the slaves to revolt and encouraged and aided them in their escape. All were offensive to the Southerners, who, if they were to remain in the Union and keep their slaves, believed that each form of agitation had to be prevented. This was the reason for the absolute prohibition by law of any discussion of slavery in the South and "the attempt to put down discussion in the North" which Dumond thinks prevented emancipation by Southern action and enlisted the supporters of "free inquiry" in the North on the side of the abolitionists.

"Free discussion in the South, under all circumstances," Dumond says, "might have led to gradual emancipation through a transition stage of peonage or modified feudalism, without the subject becoming a political question and men's passions being inflamed by the fierce fire of the hustings. It certainly would have prevented the political contest, had it come to that, from becoming sectional in character." Against this it may be stated that there was free discussion of the question in the South until the fears, first aroused by the Santo Domingo massacre and heightened by the beginning of the abolition attack, caused Southern men, in an effort to maintain what they considered to be their civilization, to end discussion by law and the pressure of public opinion.

In reality this was never entirely stopped, for, as Eaton says, "The surprising fact about Southern laws curtailing freedom of discussion is that they were so rarely invoked. For considerable periods, especially in Virginia and North Carolina, they were allowed to become dead letter laws, and were revived only in time

of alarm or passion, as during the excitement of 1835-36 or after the John Brown raid. Otherwise, persons of Southern birth might express anti-slavery opinions almost with impunity. . . . In one respect the Southern people were highly intolerant at all times, in their attitude toward 'foreign emissaries' and toward the insulting publications of the North." Nevertheless, Eaton also seems to believe that the South could and should have permitted free discussion of this issue and that, if this had been done, the institution would have been abandoned voluntarily.

These two writers, in my opinion, fail to understand the Southern attitude towards the Negro and Slavery. This was not a question on which the people of the time thought that they could afford to be tolerant. (The question is not whether this belief was justified. It is sufficient that it existed. The historian, like the politician, may deplore the existence of a particular idea or prejudice, but he cannot ignore it because of his disapproval without committing a grievous error.) A vital interest was involved. the whole basis of civilization was at stake. Even Justice Holmes, whose view of civil liberty Eaton endorses, has recognized that there are limitations upon the right of free speech. "The most stringent protection of free speech" he says, "would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic. . . . The question in every case is whether the words are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger. . . . When a nation is at war many things that might be said in time of peace are such a hindrance to its effort that the utterance will not be endured so long as men fight." The South believed it was constantly in danger and free speech could not be permitted.

All of these writers show the positive influence exercised against the agitation of the slavery issue by the Whig and Democratic parties for, as Phillips says, "each party had a clientele distributed in every state and county of the land, and each was concerned with retaining every part and person of its constituency." Strangely, none of them has discussed George Fort Milton's contention that it was the fight between Stephen Douglas and Jefferson Davis for the control of the Democratic Party that forced the Southern wing of that Party gradually over to the position of

the "Ultras", which, in turn, gave Lincoln and the Republicans the opportunity to convince the Northern people that the new party alone could prevent the steady extension of slavery even into the free states.

There is no indication in any of these books that the author believes in the economic interpretation of the anti-slavery movement. Not one presents any evidence to connect the industrial groups with the abolition crusade. On the contrary each indicates that the conservative, property-owning groups in the free-states were actively opposed to the movement. They all emphasize its moral aspects and connect it with the religious revival that swept the whole country during the same period.

This moral aspect made any compromise on the slavery issue impossible. The Southern people were afraid to emancipate the slaves; they felt that their civilization was at stake. But to the abolitionist slavery was a positive evil that had to be ended. The tragedy of Calhoun was not, as Eaton says, "that he loved the Union, yet took the very course to destroy it", but that his sincere efforts to maintain the Union were doomed to fail. "Almost alone among his contemporaries," Gabriel says, "Calhoun saw that nationalism in the United States also depends upon security. The loyalty of the individual or of the local community to the national group is primarily the product of the conviction, often unrecognized, that safety lies in merging the life of the locality with that of the nation. As the middle of the century approached, the growing anti-slavery movement in the North threatened the civilization of the South with disruption. The people of the Cotton Kingdom had accomplished a practicable solution of that most difficult of all social puzzles, the problem of getting two unlike races to live and work together with a minimum of disorder and a reasonable amount of mutual profit. . . . Calhoun foresaw, what ultimately turned out to be the fact, that this sense of insecurity would erode the sentiment of nationalism until, if measures were not taken to protect the South, the old group loyalty would disappear and the nation would fall apart."

Dumond, who alone among these historians seems to charge Calhoun with aggression against the North, admits the truth of this contention when he says, "it was perfectly clear by 1839 that, if the effort [abolition] should be persisted in, separation would

result." It was thus in an effort to give to the South security within the Union that Calhoun developed his doctrines of nullification and the concurrent majority. If the South were to maintain, as it believed it had to maintain, an institution which was disapproved of by a majority of the people of the United States, some protection against the power of a mere numerical majority must be provided. Calhoun failed, and when in 1860 Lincoln, whom many Southerners of the time (and Dumond among these writers) believed to be an abolitionist, was elected President, the Southern States seceded.

This attempt to establish a separate government was defeated by the Northern States, and with the adoption of the thirteenth amendment the organized movement against slavery came to an end. But the South, though legally and through military force a part of the United States, was not so in spirit. Calhoun had warned that upon the issue of white supremacy the South could not compromise. Phillips says that before and after the war the South was "a land with a unity despite its diversity, with a people having common joys and common sorrows, and, above all, as to the white folk a people with a common resolve indomitably maintained—that it shall be and remain a white man's country." Reunion was to be accomplished not by the Southern people giving up this attitude but by the whole nation acquiescing in it. Southern loyalty to the national union was regained when the Supreme Court in 1883 declared that the Civil Rights Law was unconstitutional. "By it, the Court, in effect," Gabriel says, "turned over to local Southern communities the solution of the all-important race problem, subject to the limitation that chattel slavery should not be re-established. . . . The ultimate sanction behind the decision was its acceptance in the North. There were objections from the intellectual descendants of the Abolitionists. But the mass of the Northern people acquiesced. The reason for this approval was to be found in the fact that, as early as 1883, Northern folkways in the matter of race relations were developing similar, though not identical, patterns to those of the post-war South. In both regions a caste system had crystallized. The Court's decision was a tacit recognition of this system. . . . With this problem out of the way and a sense of security re-established

among Southern whites, the forces of economic advantage, of common language, and of common cultural tradition were freed for the work of creating in the South a vigorous sense of nationality."

These four books are by authors from different parts of the North and South, and each discusses the slavery controversy and the Civil War from varying angles and points of view, but, to paraphrase Phillips, there is a unity among them in spite of their diversity. They are convinced that the Civil War arose from the conviction in the minds of the people of the Free States that slavery was immoral and had to be ended, which conflicted with the fundamental belief of Southerners that it had to be continued to preserve their social order. Each of the writers has made an important contribution to the understanding of American history and has added one more revision to the constantly corrected story of the nation's past.

by John Davidson

A DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ENGLISH ON HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

IN the January, 1926, issue of the *ENGLISH JOURNAL*, Sir William Alexander Craigie wrote a lengthy article on the proposed *HISTORICAL DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ENGLISH*, as he, at that time, called it. The article was in the manner of a prospectus setting forth the reasons for such an undertaking, the intended scope, and the necessary aid that must be given for its successful completion. The article, generally speaking, is optimistic in tone, albeit somewhat given to generalities. Craigie tells of his conception of the work in 1924, although from the article we are led to believe little if any actual work had been done on it at the beginning of 1926.

According to his own words, the purpose of the dictionary was "To trace the history of the language of the United States from its beginnings in the seventeenth century to a point as near as possible to the present time". At first he questions the desirability of including words exactly the same in America and in England, but he concludes by declaring that if it is to be a real dictionary of American English it must include all words used in this country. As for slang, he says that all slang which has become a part of the accepted speech must be included. There are likewise to be a great number of quotations, as in the *NEW ENGLISH DICTIONARY*. Thus it must be seen that the undertaking, although a vast one, was calculated to do for the American language what the *NEW ENGLISH DICTIONARY* was in the process of doing for the English, and would stand as an authority, without parallel, on the moot questions of American speech.

Perhaps surprisingly, almost nothing has been written on the progress of the dictionary. On April 21, 1928, Craigie took time off from his work at the University of Chicago to write an article appearing in the *SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE* on the com-

pletion of the NEW ENGLISH DICTIONARY (i.e. without the *Supplement*). Again, in the February 21st, 1931 issue of the same magazine he has written an article entitled "An American Language" in which, although he admits there has been such a thing, he concludes that any language we may call American English must shortly disappear before the approach of a "universal English" which is sweeping the world. I mention the latter article only as a possible indication that Craigie was at that time becoming discouraged with his work on the dictionary. It is interesting to note also that the editor of the SATURDAY REVIEW, in a biographical sketch of Craigie accompanying the article, fails to mention his connection with the dictionary at all.

In her GUIDE TO REFERENCE BOOKS, written in 1935, Isadore Mudge writes of the new dictionary much as Craigie did in 1926. Apparently, then, the first principles persisted, or Miss Mudge would have been aware of later plans which seemed more feasible as the dictionary took shape. She states that the work "is now being compiled", and continues further by saying, "This will cover the whole vocabulary of the English language as used in America from the 17th century to the present. . ." (The underscoring is mine.)

Parts I and II of A DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN ENGLISH ON HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES appeared in 1936, well printed on good stock, but in paper covers. In format they are almost identical with the NEW ENGLISH DICTIONARY, without illustrations, and to me, at least, "stuffy". Parts I and II cover the first two letters of the alphabet, the letter *A* extending for only 103 pages, only a fraction of the number of pages accorded *A* in the NEW ENGLISH DICTIONARY. The title page (actually the outside cover) has the names of Craigie and J. R. Hulbert as "collaborators". Obviously, then, there has been some change from the original intention of Craigie voiced in 1926.

The most revealing information is to be found in the unsigned "Preface" to the first part. Not so much in substance, perhaps, as in tone, the whole is a "backing down" from the original statement of policy. It is an apology rather than an explanation. Without giving a reason, the writer of the "Preface" describes the dictionary to be a "less ambitious work" than previously contemplated. Most words with identical English meanings have

been omitted. The NEW ENGLISH DICTIONARY has been drawn on heavily, as have all earlier studies of Americanisms. Only slang and dialect words "of early date and great importance" are included, and there are no new words which have come into the language since 1899.

This last limitation seems particularly unfortunate. Craigie had desired to include words as nearly as possible to the present time. Miss Mudge, as late as 1935, had reason to feel that words "to the present" would be given. Anyone reading such a book as H. L. Mencken's THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE, must realize that our language has undergone greater change, our vocabulary has developed more proportionately, since 1900 than ever before. To exclude all Americanisms since 1899 is not to write a dictionary of the American language.

What the reasons for the later policy for making this dictionary may be, I am not in a position to say. What Craigie's attitude toward it has become I do not know either. Perhaps I have been unfair in my opinion of it; perhaps my lack of more definite information has resulted in a distorted interpretation. I do indeed know of no present work which is as inclusive as the new one must be when and if it is finished. But of the mass of material already at hand, there is much which certainly is not to be surpassed or even duplicated by the new dictionary.

Craigie is an Englishman, which, I suppose, is neither to his advantage nor disadvantage as the editor of an American dictionary. Nevertheless, during those years in which he has been working on the American dictionary, he has also been editor-in-chief of the OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY, completed in 1933, and of the DICTIONARY OF THE OLDER SCOTTISH TONGUE, the first part of which appeared in 1931. Perhaps, as yet, he has had little time for the American dictionary; perhaps he has found it less to his liking than he had imagined. I should like to see that sort of an American dictionary which might be made under the direction of H. L. Mencken.

by Stuart Gerry Brown

POETRY AND TRADITION

MODERN POETRY AND THE TRADITION. By Cleanth Brooks. 253 pp. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 1939. \$2.50.

MODERN POETRY. By Louis MacNeice. 205 pp. Oxford University Press. 1938. \$3.00.

It is now more than twenty years since the first essays and poems of T. S. Eliot indicated a new direction for the criticism of poetry and suggested a desirable shift in the convention of poetry itself. A growing number of writers on poetry have been following the leads of his essays on "Tradition and the Individual Talent" and "Metaphysical Poetry", developing and qualifying his positions and contributing fresh ideas, revaluations and insights of their own. The names of I. A. Richards, F. R. Leavis, William Empson, Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice in England, and Edmund Wilson, R. P. Blackmur, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Theodore Spencer, and F. O. Matthiessen in the United States give some indication of the scope which this critical revolution has achieved. Although the work of these men is for the most part of high quality, it is not systematic, but largely sporadic and fragmentary; and for some time there has been need for a book which should summarize, synthesize and evaluate what has thus far been done. It is the purpose of Mr. Brooks's book to fill this need; and I wish one could say without qualification that he has succeeded. But the book is distressingly uneven and, in spite of two fine essays, on the whole disappointing.

In his preface, Mr. Brooks says frankly that his claim to credit rests primarily on his "having made a successful synthesis of other men's ideas", and disclaims originality for his own. We must take him at his word, for nearly all of what is valid and illuminating in the positions developed is to be found in the work of Eliot, Leavis or some other. The danger of setting out to make such a synthesis lies in the likelihood of achieving only

a re-hash; and Mr. Brooks has not entirely avoided the pitfall.

In his opening chapters he restates the familiar thesis that the condition for understanding the more significant modern poets is a knowledge of the conventions of the metaphysical poets of the early 17th century. The primary quality of that poetry is its use of a kind of exaggerated metaphor or wit for the communication of the complex and the dramatic. The imagery of a Shakespeare or a Donne successfully reconciles opposing elements of experience, and is often capable of resolving discords between the light and the vulgar on the one hand, and the serious on the other. Mr. Brooks shows in some detail how poetry suffered when, in the 17th and 18th centuries, wit was gradually reduced to the level of satire or even low comedy. By the 19th century, under the influence of the romantic tradition, wit in the old sense had entirely disappeared; and it is not until the time of Eliot that poetry returns once more to the high-way of metaphysical excellence. All this is familiar enough and Mr. Brooks's restatement is adequate and useful. One may perhaps question whether Arnold's "high seriousness" amounts to no more than the "steady fervor" which Coleridge thought the poet must possess. Indeed, one becomes a little tired with the objection that Coleridge or Arnold was not Donne. But for the most part Mr. Brooks is convincing, and the only blemish on his writing is that he seems so sure that his readers will not agree with him.

The heart of the book is a series of essays which consider, among others, Frost, Auden, MacLeish, Eliot, and Yeats; and here Mr. Brooks is at his best. The originality of his critique of Frost, for example, in which he shows the close relation which Frost bears to the symbolist poets of his own time and to the earlier metaphysical tradition gives the lie to the disclaimer of the preface. I think Mr. Frost would be a little surprised to find himself in the same camp with an Eliot or an Auden, but the point of view is valid none the less. An admirer of MacLeish, on the other hand, will be surprised to learn that that poet is defective in dramatic imagination. According to Mr. Brooks, his imagery hovers perilously between the metaphysical and the sentimental, and his perception, on the whole, misses the dramatic complexity of the best poets. It is curious that the verse plays for radio, "The Fall of the City" and "Air Raid", are excluded from the

discussion. Here, I should think, it would be easy to show that an extraordinarily complex struggle between human fears and human perceptions of objective reality has produced drama of nearly unbearable suspense. Some indication of the debt which Auden owes to the rhythms and diction of Hopkins and to certain qualities of old English poetry would have rounded out an otherwise excellent estimate of his achievement. But again, as in the case of Frost, the reader will be grateful to Mr. Brooks for wise guidance in his reading.

After an excessively irritating opening sentence in which he says that "it will not be difficult to show that most of its critics misconceive entirely the theme and the structure of the poem", Mr. Brooks moves into a full and interesting account of *THE WASTE LAND*. Much of his discussion depends upon the work of Edmund Wilson and Leavis, but he goes further and shows more carefully than anyone else has done how closely the myth of the Grail Quest is woven into the texture of the poem. Read, as Mr. Brooks reads it, with constant attention to the myth as the basis of its structure, one appreciates the inter-relation and inter-communication, among the five sections of the poem, of themes, symbols and images in a way that is impossible if he reads it with attention only to the theme of spiritual drouth. But when he disagrees with Mr. Leavis in the interpretation of the conclusion of the poem Mr. Brooks is less persuasive. If the poem does not end where it began, if some way out of the waste land is in fact suggested by the last passages, it is difficult to account for the hopelessness of 'These fragments I have shored against my ruins.'

The chapter on Yeats seems to me extraordinarily fine. Here Mr. Brooks is evidently on sure ground. He gives a careful exposition of *A VISION* (a very useful summary which was obviously a considerable task to prepare) and proceeds to show how some of the more effective passages of his later poetry rest upon the myth. At the same time he is careful to show that it does not really matter, poetically speaking, whether Yeats believed in the objective truth of his 'magic' or not. The point is precisely that it is a *myth* and not science; and it does not need to be opposed to science in the manner of formal logic. Those of us who have previously been moved by 'Byzantium' and

'Sailing to Byzantium' cannot fail to be impressed by Mr. Brooks's analysis and to find our enjoyment and participation in the experience greatly enriched.

In his concluding chapters Mr. Brooks offers an explanation for the disappearance from poetry of the special qualities of Elizabethan tragedy and sketches the main lines which a new history of English poetry ought to follow, beginning with the early seventeenth century. This should complete the 'synthesis'; and in a way it does. Mr. Brooks summarizes the suggestions of such critics as Leavis and Empson and adds several of his own. Among the latter are the notion that science as logical statement is unfriendly to the dramatic imagination and discourages the kind of wit that characterized metaphysical poetry, and the assigning to Hobbes of a great share of the responsibility for the decay of the tradition. But some of the ingredients do not seem to mix. For example, if the 'critical revolution' of the seventeenth century, which broke off the metaphysical tradition by reducing wit to the plane of satire or low comedy, was largely a function of the growing triumph of science, one is tempted to ask why such monuments of 'metaphysical' excellence as *THE MODEST PROPOSAL* and *THE BEGGARS OPERA* should be found (as Mr. Brooks maintains) in the prose of the eighteenth century. Perhaps it is not the creative imagination but the formal aspects of verse to which science is hostile! Again, some proof would seem to be necessary to sustain the thesis on Hobbes' influence. I, at any rate, find it hard to believe that his dicta played a very great rôle in shaping the poetry of a Dryden or a Pope. It should be added that Mr. Brooks, like his predecessors in this field of criticism, seems either unable or unwilling to deal with Milton in terms of the tradition.

A history of poetry written in terms of Mr. Brooks's sketch would, I am afraid, place far too much value on wit. It may well be that the best poetry has viewed the world and experience as complex; that it has tended to be a poetry which tries to resolve discords, reconcile opposites, be dialectical. But wit is only one device of one kind of imagination; and it does not follow that poetry which lacks wit is inferior, or even undramatic. It is surely not a very penetrating criticism which would by implication exclude 'Lycidas', the 'Triumph of Dulness', *THE DUNCIAD*,

some of Johnson's satire, the theft of the boat in *THE PRELUDE*, some of the lyrics of *IN MEMORIAM* or the radio plays of MacLeish from the sphere of the dramatic and perhaps even the serious and complex. It is possible that a truer synthesis, even of the ideas of the critics from whom Mr. Brooks borrows, would emphasize the real, though at times tenuous, continuity of the tradition, and raise questions of a more directly social nature as to the failure of the dramatic imagination to remain in the ascendancy.

Mr. MacNeice's essay is of a quite different sort from Mr. Brooks's more ambitious work. It is 'a personal essay', non-systematic and discursive. But it is filled with wise and illuminating comment and fresh insights. In some ways it is complementary to Mr. Brooks's work. Mr. MacNeice deals in detail, for example, with the influence of Hopkins upon Auden, Spender, and himself; and this is a needed corrective to the overemphasis which has usually been placed upon seventeenth century wit. He examines also the vexed question of the relation of poetry to society with fruitful results.

There has been, it seems to me, a general tendency among the more sensitive critics of modern poetry (of whom Mr. Brooks is certainly one) to deal too exclusively with the formal aspects of poetry. And I suspect that Mr. Eliot is largely responsible for this tendency. As a poet he has always been legitimately concerned primarily with his craft and with the tradition of his craft. But a rounded criticism will have to account for the appearance of Mr. Eliot himself and provide some sort of objective explanation for his enormous influence. I suspect that a part of that explanation will turn out to be that the atmosphere of intellectual and political struggle in which modern poetry and criticism have flourished is in some ways like the atmosphere of the early seventeenth century, and that our best poets have been active participants in the vital controversies of their time as were many of their metaphysical ancestors. Mr. MacNeice speaks to the point when he writes this:

My own prejudice, therefore, is in favour of poets whose worlds are not too esoteric. I would have a poet able-bodied, fond of talking, a reader of the newspapers, capable of pity and laughter, informed in economics, appreciative of women,

involved in personal relationships, actively interested in politics, susceptible to physical impressions. The relationship between life and literature is almost impossible to analyze, but it should not be degraded into something like the translation of one language into another. For life is not literary, while literature is not, in spite of Plato, essentially second hand.

It is interesting that Mr. MacNeice believes that modern poetry is moving away from Symbolism. If this is so, and I think it is, it follows that it may be becoming less derivative and more original. "The suggestions of the Symbolists," according to Mr. MacNeice, "may still be occasionally used, but for an end outside themselves. On the other hand, rhetoric (which the Symbolists banned) will be used, as by Auden, but similarly not for its own sake". One might add that MacLeish is another distinguished modern poet who finds that rhetoric can be put to excellent use. "True rhetoric [to continue] presupposes a certain scale of values, certain conceptions of good and evil. Such a scale of values, however uncertain and fluctuating, is implicit in the poetry of Auden and Spencer", and, one may add again, of MacLeish and MacNeice. Indeed, it seems not to much to hope that these poets, who were born, as it were, in the revived tradition, may apply the techniques they have borrowed from Mr. Eliot to the genuinely dramatic materials of their time in such a way as to lead poetry out of his waste land.

by Henry W. Wells

THE REVOLT AGAINST METAPHYSICAL POETRY

FROM *DONNE TO DRYDEN*, Robert Lathrop Sharp, University of North Carolina Press, pp. xii-221, \$3.00.

Two types of literary criticism are always in demand: cursory

essays introducing readers to fields that are new to them, and detailed studies refining our ideas on fields already in a general way familiar. Mr. Strong's book, an interpretative history of English seventeenth-century poetry, falls midway between the two types. It is insufficiently broad, simple, and illuminating for the more general reader but I fear that it will prove insufficiently fresh and discriminating entirely to satisfy specialists. Yet it is certainly one of the best balanced and most judicious studies of a large and important subject, showing its author's impartial admiration for both Dryden and Donne, the Augustan and the Elizabethan age. Its chief merit is that it materially qualifies easy and commonplace judgments regarding the period. Its limitation is that it departs from such commonplaces no further than it does, for it fails to impart any radically new ideas, to entertain its readers with any large number of subtle discernments, or to show the important bearing of its subject upon the poets and public of our own day.

The book begins with a familiar description of Donne's place among the poets of his own lifetime. It proceeds to sketch the work of his followers and—at greater length—of the critics, poets, philosophers, educators, and divines who led the revolt from Donne's ideals. The volume concludes with a summary chapter on these literary problems as embodied in Dryden.

Especially valuable is its research in tracing the roots of the Augustan spirit further back than customary. While the importance of Ben Jonson for English neo-classicism has long been known, critics have too easily accepted the loose observation that the Elizabethan period ran its course followed in due time by the Augustan. Vital roots of the Augustan tree were already in the Elizabethan soil. One might even go further in this direction than Mr. Strong does. If we must fall back upon easy generalities, it seems better to view Donne as an Elizabethan than as a Cavalier poet, and the majority of the metaphysicals as distant followers of the Tribe of Ben than as Donne's own direct heirs. A phenomenally creative age passed away with the Jacobean; the essential attitudes of Augustanism were always uppermost in the succeeding reign.

Mr. Strong's study is happier in its specific references than in its general terms. In other words, his most attractive pages rely

least on terms such as Elizabethan or Augustan, metaphysical or neo-classical, the school of Donne, of Jonson or of Spenser, and most on the author's discernment of more finely drawn and more significant distinctions between brief passages from Donne and Cowley, Dryden and Waller, and other writers of the times. Typical of the limited number of fresh apprehensions are the description of Marvell's smoothness as forward-looking rather than as metaphysical, the judicious treatment of Drayton's occasional relation to the metaphysical poets, and a remark that Milton showed an Augustan love of simplicity in widely separating his pensive and allegro moods.

Exception may plausibly be taken to a few details. The author nowhere scrutinizes closely the nature of Elizabethan "conceits". He overlooks the gravity and subjectivity of Spenser as well as the occasional objectivity of Donne—as, for example, in his *Satires*. He fails to hear the deep music of Donne's roughest verses. He writes of the "disintegration of the Elizabethan world" during the Cavalier period, forgetting that the world of which he speaks had disintegrated before the death of Marlowe. The rôle of Chapman he questionably minimizes. Important relations of dramatic to non-dramatic poetry are neglected; the place of Shakespeare and the significance of Fletcher are slighted. The sprightliness of metaphysical wit seems to have attracted Mr. Strong very little, and he typically overlooks the grace of Cowley's *Anacreontics*. Although his statement of the relations of classical and romantic elements in the mid-seventeenth-century is notably fair and judicious, there is the natural but unfortunate disposition to exaggerate the romantic side of the Elizabethans and to minimize this phase of the Augustans. While some poets, as Cleveland and Cowley, are treated quite fully, others, as Suckling and Prior, are analyzed less thoroughly than might be wished. The critic appears insensitive to the splendor of Dryden's important neo-classical flattery and—on what grounds I know not!—speaks of certain mature elegies by Dryden as "unimportant". Especially in view of the attractive subject, the style seems more workmanlike than lively. Finally, the chief defect of this notable but not faultless survey lies in its lack of specific parallels, so often invited by this subject, between the literary problems of the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries. But elaborate fault

finding would be unwarranted. However specialists and the general public may qualify their views, both groups are indebted to Mr. Strong for a serious, useful, and remarkably impartial study with considerable matter in small compass.

by Jane Lawson

SURD OF THE SOUL

IN DREAMS BEGIN RESPONSIBILITIES. By Delmore Schwartz. NEW DIRECTIONS Press, Darien Connecticut. 1938.

Salvation is the theme. Delmore Schwartz believes in dreams, but he believes in man even more. Though he takes one of his texts from Marx, it is not the popularly known Marx: "The root of the individual. . . is the individual himself." And the individual is a dreamer, who must be made into a doer.

Self-examination is the beginning, though not the end, of Schwartz's work. That work is lyric, but lyric with the intent of making all men share his passionate honesty with life, his responsibility for his dreams. Not tranquil recollections but conflicts and emotions continuously part of him are demonstrated with critical accuracy. He seeks to uncover the source of inaction and inertia in the face of such paralysing conflicts for his contemporaries.

To start with, he does not see the political animal man has become to so many writers. Unlike many poets of his age he has not seen fit to adopt a stereotyped line to give his writing backbone, or maybe to assure an audience. He will find his audience as surely as he is finding his own line, for many will be glad to recognize man, ". . . that wounded nudity about which all things whirl", as he appears to Mr. Schwartz. Feeling the near divinity of the original, creative personality, the surd of the soul, he finds the human dilemma one of pathos. He quotes more than once his belief that most men lead lives of quiet desperation, the

victims of innumerable intentions, adding, "why be desperate, even quietly?" Life slips past us out of reach, like a motion picture.

It undoubtedly does. Mr. Schwartz fails to tell how it came about, this loss of control. His concern is with the problem of reestablishing contact between dream and act. "Be guilty of yourself in the full looking-glass" is his exhortation. Closing our eyes in the subway and dreaming of houses, the cinema, Asia, must stop, life must be grasped, by conscious examination of the desires which govern our acts, desires hidden in dreams, declares Schwartz's poetic psychoanalysis. He leaves undefined what the examination will disclose—the ghosts at "Coriolanus", Freud, Marx, Aristotle, Beethoven suggest that many interpretations are possible—asking only that the initial honesty be achieved, and saying only that good will follow. Let the heart know how to make choices, man will escape from the "mechanical whims of appetite" as a governing law.

This may seem too simple a point to be worth the variations and repetitions given it. That the point is both simple in stating and capable of complex developments is well demonstrated by Mr. Schwartz's treatment.

In a curious way, for example, the time-theme has been loaded with significance, different than and yet reminiscent of MacLeish's use. "We are guilty of time. We act as if life were a selffounded sphere; yet time is in you, you are dying. Time is death." What is finished is unchangeable, dead; man's hope is in his incompleteness; from this idea stems Mr. Schwartz's feeling of responsibility, his realisation of the vital importance of knowing what you are doing.

Every man is his past, though he cannot see it. He must move forward in time dragging every fear and every beauty of every year with him. He carries his habits, which are his childhood, strapped to him like his wristwatch, beating. He moves because he must; he must create again and again from what has been the unheard-of future. He must create what has never existed. The past is transformed in him. The world begins again. All is torn in him and altered in the richest exchanges.

The magnitude of this portrait is overwhelming. It is the new

and noble concept of man embodying change as his vital spark, living in a world of limitlessness and contradiction and hope. The poet finds it imperative that we view this creature with disgust, or it will remain a giant in chains. Truly, the world condition as of the morning's headlines may call for a viewing with disgust by mankind of mankind, but it is a pity that Schwartz, beyond giving the direction to selfcriticism, discovers no traits, marks out no motives, to build on. Can the individual find none, he must presumably act as Dr. Bergen and Hamlet, dying in order to examine the soul in the certain perspective of death.

Such a summary of his views does not do justice to the poetic stature of Schwartz's work. Writing dealing with conflicts and the crisis of indecision might be rough, incomplete or discordant, but not here, where there is finished poetry containing the strains of the conflict in lines of forceful precision. Here is not a "young man of promise", but one of poetic maturity. Poetic sensitivity and individuality of perceptions plus craftsmanship give his writing, though it may sometimes lack spontaneity or freshness, great impact and lasting effect. The poetry of emotional contacts with garbage cans, park benches and alarm clocks creates a mood as a swing band does, with intoxicating verbal demagoguery, but it is incomplete poetically, the mood vanishes without a trace. Schwartz, criticising Pound, says ". . . It is not a question of merely reflecting [modern experience] in one's writing by an equivalent disorder upon the verbal level. . . . The difficult and ineluctable task is to say something intelligent and just about modern experience and to be sure that modern experience is actually contained in the poem and the intelligence and justice made relevant to it." He adheres remarkably to his own doctrine.

Being dubbed the American Auden is dubious as a compliment to Delmore Schwartz, and a flat contradiction in epithets, though it is a recognition of an element in a common classical education. With well-organized devices and brilliant conceits Mr. Schwartz shows that his literary heritage has taken root and blossomed. Particularly beautiful are the fugue poems, and his nearest approach to inventiveness. A feeling of classic strictness in mastery of his medium without visibly altering it mark Mr. Schwartz out from other American writers, though if necessary to prove his nationality he can produce the trademarks of chewing gum and

movies in his lines in sufficient numbers to satisfy the research reader. Burningly contemplative, he could call on Blake, never on the vigorous brawny Whitmanism or loose unintense Carlos Williams ease, so distinctly American idiom. Finesse and penetration like Eliot's, with less vinegar to draw the will, characterise the American who stayed home. Unlike Eliot, he faces himself instead of the wasteland, and gives the world his belief that if man would make the wasteland flower he must first save his soul.

by Maurice Moore, Jr.

MATTHEW PRIOR

MATTHEW PRIOR: POET AND DIPLOMATIST: by Charles Kenneth Eves. Columbia University Press, 1939.

Matthew Prior is one of the wittiest, cleverest, and most versatile of English writers. To the general reader, however, he is known only by a handful of exquisitely light, occasional "vers de société" which have received the encomiums of such connoisseurs as Cowper, Thackeray, and Austin Dobson. But his deserved fame in this "genre" has served to obscure his achievements in other forms of verse, in prose, and in diplomacy.

That the ambitious literary man under Queen Anne found politics the readiest road to fame if not fortune is a commonplace of literary history. The careers of Swift, Addison, Steele, and, on a lower plane, of Defoe all illustrate this fact. Even the later poems of Pope, whose religion disbarred him from public office, are full of political allusions. Almost no poet of the time is free from the all pervading influence of politics. Of Prior is this particularly true, for he made politics the chief business of his life.

"I had rather be thought a good Englishman" wrote Prior, "than the best poet or greatest scholar that ever wrote." As a

matter of fact he was indisputably the leading poet of England during the first decade of the eighteenth century, and his private library was larger than that of any literary man of his time; furthermore, none of his countrymen could speak or write French better than he. But as in the case of his older contemporary, Dryden, and younger contemporary, Pope, most critics have consistently condemned the man while eulogizing the poet. And just as Professor Bredvold and Sherburn have attempted to rehabilitate the characters of Dryden and Pope respectively, so does Professor Eves avowedly make out the best case he can for Prior. Yet he wisely refrains from falling into the error, common among biographers, of attributing to their heroes higher qualities than the evidence will support. For instance, he frankly admits the bachelor Prior's penchant for amours with women of low birth and doubtful reputation—probably a result of his youthful association with tavern life—and even identifies them whenever possible; one was his housekeeper for almost twenty-five years and variously appears in the poems as Cloe or Flanders Jane or Jinny the Just. Now the standards of both sexual and political morality were notoriously low at this period, but Prior's contemporaries apparently regarded political tergiversation as the more heinous; at any rate Whigs and Tories alike, at different times, accused him of time-serving and treachery—one is inevitably reminded of the opprobrium being simultaneously heaped upon Defoe. Though Professor Eves is always careful to cite extenuating circumstances, he has been unable to refute the charge; indeed on more than one occasion he tacitly admits that Prior sacrificed friendship to ambition. In contrast, most will agree, I believe, that Professor Bredvold has successfully defended Dryden from a similar attack.

Nevertheless it is safe to predict that Professor Eves's book will take its place as the authoritative biography for many years to come. It is admirably thorough and well documented; he seems to have overlooked no important source of information, he has uncovered hitherto unused material, and he has shed new light on many disputed points. One must perforce admire his masterly grasp and clear exposition of the complicated pattern of foreign and domestic politics. Especially worthy of note too is his vivid re-creation of the manners, personalities, and intrigues

at the brilliant court of Louis XIV. Above all he has succeeded in making Prior live, move, and breathe as a real human being and not as a mere automaton manipulated by strings; this he has done without recourse to psychoanalysis or Freudian complexes. Furthermore his book is vigorously, lucidly, and pleasingly written. In such an all-round excellent biography it would be invidious to complain of a few sweeping generalizations and doubtful assumptions.

While Professor Eves has nothing new or original to say about the aesthetic value of the poems, he does explain fully for the first time the occasions and motives which produced them. He follows a chronological method and skillfully interweaves a discussion of the poems with his account of the poet's life.

Keenly conscious of his lack of money and family influence, yet decidedly averse to taking holy orders, Prior felt it his prime duty to earn a living and devoted most of his energies to the advancement of his diplomatic career. Consequently he always regarded the Muse as of secondary importance, a diversion of his idle hours, an amusing but unessential pastime. Symptomatic of his attitude are some of his rather crude college verses in which he admires the Court poets of the Restoration as superior both in fortune and in wit to "drudge Dryden" and his like, who eked out a precarious living with their pens, and for whom he expresses great scorn. No starving in a garret for him; he would seek economic security and social prestige in a more lucrative profession! Despite his contemporary reputation as a wit, he made the mistake of trying to please everybody and in the end was distrusted by both parties. His bitter disillusionment, exacerbated by ill-health and unpaid salaries, is reflected in many melancholy, sometimes cynical, passages in his letters and more serious poems and even crops out in some of his light verse. The following passage is typical, the last two lines being an interesting anticipation of Gray's 'Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College':

Our hopes, like towering falcons, aim
At objects in an airy height:
The little pleasure of the game
Is from afar to view the flight.

From ignorance our comfort flows:
The only wretched are the wise.

Compare also his extempore French song, 'Bannisons la Melancholie'.

Professor Eves maintains that he was a pessimist by temperament, like Dr. Johnson. Certainly the argument and very title of the poem which Prior considered his masterpiece, *SOLOMON ON THE VANITY OF THE WORLD*, anticipates Johnson; and the following sentence from the Preface is a striking adumbration of Johnson's thought and style: "The pleasures of life do not compensate the miseries: age steals upon us unawares; and death, as the only cure of our ills, ought to be expected but not feared." But the truth is that he was easily depressed or elated by external changes in fortune, and therefore grave or gay as her wheel went up or down. Moreover, despite Prior's nominal adherence to the Anglican Church, it does not seem to me that he shared Johnson's deep religious sense. His fine, oft-quoted lines, 'Written in the Beginning of Mézeray's HISTORY OF FRANCE'—a particular favorite with Scott, by the way—was mainly the result of a profound but temporary despondency induced by a serious illness from which he was just recovering:

Whate'er thy countrymen have done
By law and wit, by sword and gun,
In thee is faithfully recited;
And all the living world that view
Thy work, give thee the praises due,
At once instructed and delighted.

Yet for the fame of all these deeds
What beggar in the Invalides
With lameness broke, with blindness smitten,
Wish'd ever decently to die,
To have been either Mézeray
Or any monarch he has written?

It's strange, dear author, yet it true is,
That down from Pharamond to Louis
All covet life yet call it pain,
And feel the ill yet shun the cure;
Can sense this paradox endure!
Resolve me, Cambray or Fontaine.

The man in graver tragic known
(Tho' his best part long since was done)
Still on the stage desires to tarry;
And he who play'd the Harlequin
After the jest still loads the scene,
Unwilling to retire tho' weary.

We must remember, first, that his most religious poem, an ode on Exodus 3:14, was written as a college exercise in honor of one of the college's patrons; and second, that its central idea, the excoriation of man's pride in his own knowledge, and of his presumptuous belief that reason, instead of faith, can explain the universe, may logically be one among many contemporary manifestations (e.g., Dryden's *RELIGIO LAICI*, II.I-11) of that ancient and honorable tradition of philosophical skepticism which, beginning with Pyrrho of Elis (c. 360-270 B.C.), numbered among its later followers Montaigne, Sir Thos. Browne, Pascal, and Dryden. Again in *SOLOMON* Prior repeats the same ideas. This disbelief in the power of reason to comprehend ultimate truth led also to an attack on science in both of these poems; like Butler and Swift he was always skeptical of science. And his facetious *jeu d'esprit*, *ALMA*, pokes merry fun at all philosophical systems. Fundamentally, while Johnson was a Christian Stoic, Prior's skepticism was essentially pagan. To him the world is ruled by chance; his habitual reference to a capricious and inexorable fate was no mere whim or literary convention but the querulous plaint of frustrated ambition. Especially significant are his frequent mention and admiration of Lucretius.

Happily his paganism has its more attractive, Epicurean side. His writings are full of classical color and allusion; the influence of Horace, from whom he derived much of his grace, elegance, and polish, is obvious on almost every page. According to Miss Caroline Goad (*HORACE IN THE ENGLISH LITERATURE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY*, 1918, pp. 90-116), Prior borrowed phrases and even ideas from Horace, imitated his Odes, learned his light touch; but she agrees with Quiller-Couch in saying that Prior lacked Horace's deeper, more serious utterance, and attributes it, correctly, I think, to his trivial character. In her opinion Addison, above all writers of the eighteenth century, has caught the Roman poet's urbane humanity and sweetness of spirit.

Intimately allied with these Horatian qualities are Prior's affinities with Herrick as man and poet. The parallel is drawn by Oswald Doughty (*THE ENGLISH LYRIC IN THE AGE OF REASON*, 1922, pp. 46-56), who refers to their light, ironical humor, "carpe diem" philosophy, admiration of Horace, love of wine, delight in women, fondness for children, ability to laugh at themselves as

well as at others. Indeed it is not unreasonable to regard Prior as a late representative of the Cavalier and Court Poets. But here too Doughty believes that he missed Herrick's greatest qualities: tenderness, love of nature, childlike simplicity, delicate cadences of expression.

Despite Prior's steady denigration of his own verses he confesses that he finds the poetic impulse ineluctable, and he displays an astonishing variety of subject and form. Political considerations will explain many dull, conventional panegyrics on the Royal Family and certain influential peers, but he indicates his satirical bent when he calls Butler "my master". For parody he had a positive genius: witness his incomparable treatment of Boileau's 'Ode sur la prise de Namur' and his laughable but cruel version of Dryden's *THE HIND AND THE PANTHER* in *THE COUNTRY MOUSE AND THE CITY MOUSE*, which is said to have made the Poet-Laureate weep for vexation. His skill in narrative was exceptional, and his gay, realistic, colloquial tales—many of them moralizing—caused Pope and the French to dub him the English *La Fontaine*; 'An English Padlock' ridicules the jealous husband in the true Restoration spirit. Like most contemporary poets he produced an ample number of coarse, indecent verses; the brief, satirical descriptions of a woman's dressing table read like first drafts of Swift's far more scatological performances. His epigrams are undeniably witty, and his other works include a few prologues and epilogues, a half dozen religious poems, three epitaphs on himself, ballads ('Henry and Emma' is a rhetorical, neo-classical profanation of the 'Nut Brown Maid') enigmas, dialogues, innumerable love songs, at least one elegy, pastorals—his fondness for artificial, pastoral names in his amorous poems is excessively tiresome—translations, paraphrases, and imitations of various Greek and Latin poets. Pope's expressed preference for the jesting, light-hearted satire, *ALMA*, over the solemn, pretentious *SOLOMON* annoyed Prior; but those familiar with both poems will agree with Pope. These two poems well illustrate the contrasting sides of his nature: the grave and the gay. Many of his lyrics, epigrams, and even 'Henry and Emma' were set to music. Thackeray noticed his likeness to Thomas Moore, whom he resembles in his gift of song, volatile temperament, and rather superficial mind.

Perhaps his worst poems are the Pindaric odes and the modifications of the Spenserian Stanza to ten lines. Much has been made of his remark in the Preface to *SOLOMON*: ". . . he that writes in rhymes dances in fetters", and of his description elsewhere of rhyme as "monkish" and jangling; such an opinion looks back to Milton and Roscommon and forward to Edward Young. But he left only one specimen of blank verse and that is incomplete. Besides the heroic couplet he made frequent and skillful use of the octosyllabic couplet, which was also a favorite with Swift. In at least two instances he employed the rapid anapestic measure to give us two of his most entertaining and popular poems: 'Down-Hall', a narrative instinct with life; and 'Jinny the Just,' a first-rate eighteenth century "character".

Although his prose is scarcely known at all except to a very few, it deserves more attention than it has received. Buried in the archives of the French Foreign Office are what Professor Eves describes as charming letters to his friend Torcy, Louis XIV's foreign minister, written in elegant, polished French. At its best his English prose has the conversational ease, grace, and calm self-assurance of his more successful poems—unfortunately most of it remained unpublished until 1907. Besides two informal but thoughtful essays on learning and opinion, both of autobiographical value, he wrote four *DIALOGUES OF THE DEAD*, thereby inviting comparison with Lucian and Fontenelle. Each dialogue is a lively representation of sharp contrasts between the speakers, and the author's own sympathies are clearly marked. By far the wittiest is the dialogue between Montaigne and Locke, in which the English philosopher is unmercifully lampooned. Prior's attitude here is exceptional, for the eighteenth century admired Locke extravagantly, especially his political philosophy. It is, therefore, interesting to compare one of Lord Lyttelton's twenty-five *DIALOGUES OF THE DEAD* (1760) in which Locke is contrasted favorably with the skeptic Bayle.

by Aerol Arnold

CAN YOU READ?

HOW TO READ A BOOK. By Mortimer Adler. New York: Simon and Schuster 1940. 398 pages with index. \$2.50

Had Mr. Adler's book been titled "How to Read *Some* Books" there would be less danger of his being misunderstood and misrepresented. For the essential part of the book is devoted to a discussion of the methods by which books written to give insight may be read intelligently. The author is not concerned with books devoted to facts, and only in passing does he discuss books intended to delight. The scope of the book is limited, and necessarily so, for the author realizes that there are as many kinds of reading as there are types of writing: philosophy cannot be read as poetry must be, nor mathematics the way we read *Life*. One virtue of Mr. Adler as writer is that he does not try to do everything; what he does he does well.

To read well, to think clearly, and to express oneself exactly about insights is the goal toward which he aims. His method, in brief, is the method used by good teachers of rhetoric when they set out to teach students to write. It is to see the relationship of the whole to the parts and the parts to the whole; it is to analyse the relations within the parts, to define terms, to see what changes take place in the use of terms, and to identify the main problems which the author tries to solve. It further requires that the reader find the main propositions and arguments and see whether the author has really solved the problems he set himself.

Once understanding has been achieved, the reader is ready to criticize. Where criticism is negative, it will indicate that (1) the author is uninformed, (2) or misinformed, (3) or illogical, (4) or that his presentation of the case is incomplete. Mr. Adler does not suppose that with understanding comes resolution of all disagreements. Even after the reader has come to terms with the writer, the author's experience of the world may so contradict that of the reader as to make agreement impossible. However, where

knowledge, not opinion, is at stake, he does believe that by an appeal to fact and reason a resolution can take place, in the long run.

Mr. Adler's discussion of the methods of reading constitutes the second part of the book. The first part is given over to a definition of what he means by reading and to a kind of autobiography of his discontent with the state of reading—and, consequently, with the state of learning in American colleges and universities. In his chapter "The Defeat of the Schools" he summarizes the dismal facts of the Carnegie report on Pennsylvania schools, the article by Professor James Mursell of Columbia's Teachers College which appeared in *THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY* under the title which Mr. Adler chose for his chapter, and the results of the four-day conference on reading held at the University of Chicago in June, 1939. All the studies boil down to Professor Diederich's conclusion that "our pupils are not getting very much direct help in understanding what they read or hear, or in knowing what they mean by what they say or write."

All over America, and in England, as well, teachers have been troubled by the conditions described by Mr. Adler and the scholars from whom he quotes. Within the last few years numerous books have appeared—like I. A. Richard's *INTERPRETATION IN TEACHING* and Tenney's admirable workbook *INTELLIGENT READING*, as well as many inferior anthologies which include questions on the subject matter, and to some extent on the form, of the essays included—which attempt to do something about the inadequacy of training in the means of communication. But Adler's book, in many ways, is the most complete of any I have seen, for his is the only one interested in total analysis. That is, he goes beyond the paragraph, where Tenney leaves off, to the chapter and the book as a whole. And teachers who have supervised the writing of research papers, especially, will agree that few students,—either in their writing or in their reading,—have any sense for structure beyond the limits of the paragraph.

The third part of the book includes a brief section on the reading of poetry, drama, and fiction; a discussion of the criteria by which the great books were selected; and an excellent chapter on the need for critical intelligence in a democracy. At the end

of the book is a list of the great works, much like the list used at Columbia and at St. John's College.

The weakest part of the book is the section on the reading of poetry, drama, and fiction, included, no doubt, for completeness. But the author admits his limited ability in handling such problems; and though what he has to say about them is not altogether mistaken or false, it is based entirely on other books—in some cases books limited in themselves, as in the case of his discussion of plot—and not on his own experience as a teacher.

Where Mr. Adler's observations are based on his own teaching experiences—and he is a splendid teacher—they are stimulating and worth the careful consideration of all who are not sure that they know all there is to know about teaching. What he has to say about free minds and free men is extremely well said. Nor does he make the mistake of believing that the ability to read the great books is all that is to be desired.

"We must act," he says. "That is the final word in every phase of human life. I have not hesitated to praise the reading and discussion of great books as things intrinsically good, but I repeat: *they are not the ultimate ends of life* [*italics his*]. We want happiness and a good society. In this larger view, reading is only a means to an end."

In his discussion of the great books Mr. Adler raises a point which, unfortunately, he does not develop at any great length, but which is one of the most important reasons for the study of the great books of both past and present. He says, "... our failure to read the great books isolates us from the world of man, just as much as unqualified allegiance to the swastika makes one a German first, and a man later."

One reason for the great success of the totalitarian ideal among the distressed and confused, it seems to me, is that it gives them a common belief, a mythology—manufactured and false, to be sure—but a mythology which has the effect of bringing men together. Developments in modern life have tended to emphasize the differentness, the separateness of individuals. Education has helped to increase this sense of separateness by concentrating on the individual differences among men. Little has been done in democratic countries to help men sense their common history and common fate.

Yet unless something is done to help each person, individually, to find his relation to the group, the number of neurotics must increase. For as all good psychiatrists agree, what characterizes the neurotic is his inability to extend his interest beyond the wall of himself. And our age tends more and more, partly because of it cultural amnesia, to become neurotic, to treat the moment as if it were eternity, to forget that peoples in other times faced basic problems similar to those we must face. Out of a study of the past which will relate the problems of our ancestors to ours may come some kind of cultural wholeness, a wholeness we sorely need. And, it seems to me, that the great interest aroused by the Chicago experiment and the experiment at St. John's College should do much to set all college teachers, particularly teachers of the humanities, to reconsider the problem of the relations of the educated individual to the long cultural tradition which has contributed to making him what he is today. For this rethinking Mr. Adler's book will be most helpful.

by Arthur E. DuBois

REVITALIZING HISTORY

MALINCHE (DONA MARINO). By Haniel Long. Santa Fe: Writers' Editions, Inc., 1939. Pp. 56. \$2.00.

Haniel Long has published four books: PITTSBURGH MEMORANDA (1935), INTERLINEAR TO CABEZA DE VACA (1936), WALT WHITMAN AND THE SPRINGS OF COURAGE (1938), and, finally MALINCHE. Three other books by this author are now out of print: POEMS (1920), NOTES FOR A NEW MYTHOLOGY (1926), and ATLANTIDES (1933). But from the four, one can begin to define some of Long's habits as a writer and perhaps estimate his powers a little. Even after four books not every writer gives one this

chance, and it isn't because other writers are more facile or fertile than Long.

After twenty years of teaching at Carnegie Tech presumably Long had found something of himself and his own springs of courage. His books have had a character of their own. All but the first of the four have been prose in form but poetry in content, and the first was poetic in content, too, but alternating between prose and verse in form. All of his books have been documented, based on records easily checked. Long's functions as a creator have been to read into these documents insights, meanings, emotions, and universalizations that perhaps others might not experience alone.

Having left teaching and Pittsburgh, maybe Long has left the kind of work represented by PITTSBURGH MEMORANDA and WALT WHITMAN. Of the four, anyway, INTERLINEAR and MALINCHE are most alike and testify to his interest in the legendry of his new home, probably pointing most positively to the kind of work he will produce hereafter, especially if he continues to publish with Writers' Editions, Inc., which fosters regional literature. In INTERLINEAR Long creates a monologue for de Vaca, in which this Catholic adventurer describes his experiences among savages, gradually revealing his growing wonder at the adaptability of the human being to hardship, human needs, and aspirations. This might be a chapter in spiritual evolution. Anyway, Long takes an available historical character and story, and idea-izes them.

In MALINCHE he "idea-izes" the character of the Indian slave girl who assisted Cortez as mistress, guide, interpreter. This Malinche (or Doña Marino or Malintzen) is well known both in historical document and Mexican legendry. Long attempts to account for her hold on the memory of white and red by making her an example of the ideal of womanhood which men have when they are mature. This is the ideal, not of the mistress or of the mother, but of the mate aiding, complementing the man in all his activities, in language, in business, in religion, in homemaking, and in love, in the last of which procreation is but an incident, certainly not a first instinct.

We need not concern ourselves with the validity of this idea-ization, either from the point of view of its suitability to the legend or of its analysis of man's idea of woman. Certainly, if

any character is to come or remain in literature perennially, writers must be free to see him as they will and must be fertile frequently to see him differently—that is the way great classical literary characters “arrive”. One might go so far as to say that the idea-ization in this volume was justified in the “Epilogue” alone because of the discriminating discussion it promoted of women in Homer, Dante, and Milton.

But the processes of idea-ization are interesting apart from its validity, and the possible uses of the processes for the promotion of ideals are unexplored. De Vaca’s was essentially an extremely lonely experience, for the description of which monologue was natural. Malinche was lonely too, for mates complement, not duplicate, each other. But by and large her experience was social-epical, not individual-romance-ish, and dramatic, not lyrical. Perhaps, following *INTERLINEAR*, *MALINCHE* took over-readily to the monologue which, of course, is one-sided at best. And maybe Long himself felt that this was so finally, for he wrote “An Epilogue regarding Malinche” which (pp. 37-55) is about as lengthy as the prose poem (pp. 3-36). And in this essay Long’s vision of the significance and drama of the story is clearer than in the poem, beautiful and complete though it be. In short, it is doubtful whether the poem quite succeeds in idea-izing itself.

I have two or three suspicions about this matter. Long’s earlier books had in them signs of having been brooded over forever. This book is thoughtful and feeling and carefully written. But it isn’t aged so carefully in the wood of Long as the others: especially the necessity of the “Epilogue” makes it seem a little raw, though the taste of a poet competent to scholar-ize his own work is a little rare! Perhaps, after all, *MALINCHE* is only 90-proof, not 100.

I suspect, moreover, that there has been a change in Long’s directions since he began using Southwestern legends. Once Long seemed to be promoting social-spiritual evolutionary ideals, not in the manner of the propagandist belonging to a party or church, but in the manner of the feeling artist. Now he seems more picturesque, the beginner of a kind of Cortez saga—a stranger is likely to be tempted by the romances of a new place.

Finally I suspect that history is not always useful but often

distracting to the *litterateur*. And the more conscientious he is as an historian like Neihardt or Masters or a college teacher, the more distracting history is. History, for example, made de Vaca a Catholic. But Catholicism as it entered INTERLINEAR for me created only ambiguities, which are always distracting—the very terms of religion are so connotative that they are bound to be misleading, if only emotionally, in anything but an out-and-out religious work.

In MALINCHE the situation is somewhat less ambiguous, at least in the "Epilogue", for the religions of Malinche and Cortez are supposed to be similar enough to necessitate no clashes and different enough for each devotee to be stimulating to the other as mates should be. Nevertheless, reminders of the historicities of Cortez's conquest have too many implications not to be distracting from the main theme, the ideality of Malinche as Woman.

Dull as DOOMSDAY BOOK may be (but I admire it), it should have proved (but didn't, even to its author, Masters) that for epical-representative purposes entirely fictional characters are more useful than are historical characters who may, like Lee, be defeated by a thunderstorm rather than by the philosophy of the writer. Neihardt's career would seem to make much the same point.

Nevertheless, it is legitimate to re-vitalize history. It is even desirable and possible to do so if the writer can feel perfectly in control of his materials, not dominated by them like the historian. And I like the work of Haniel Long even when I don't like it. To the author of PITTSBURGH MEMORANDA and WALT WHITMAN one cannot be condescending even if one says his work is still promising. I wouldn't even surely say to Long, "Take your time", or "A certain kind of local color or regional historicity binds one to place and some places are not big enough." In some senses Long writes like a scholar still—he thinks and demonstrates and documents. But if in other senses scholars could or would write like Long I'd be tempted to subscribe to all the learned quarterlies. In any man's language this would be a remarkable temptation. As an essay in folk-lore, tending to rationalize the appeal of a semi-legendary character, MALINCHE has its special value apart from all others.

by S. A. Nock

SHIFT YOUR PARTNERS

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PHYSICAL SCIENCE, by Sir Arthur Eddington. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1939. 230 and ix pages.

DANGEROUS THOUGHTS, by Lancelot Hogben. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc. 1940. 285 pages.

When two of England's leading scientists put themselves as personalities before their readers, and do so without reticence or embarrassment, the results are sure to be entertaining. If the men write as well as Sir Arthur Eddington and Mr. Hogben, the results are likely to be literature. No one who has read previous writings by either man can doubt his ability to handle the English language clearly and charmingly. Readers of previous books will probably be on the lookout for these latest publications, not necessarily because they agree with what the writers say, but because they feel they cannot afford to omit consideration of whatever it is they say. It may be that they do not want to miss the substance, or it may be that they do not want to miss the style.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PHYSICAL SCIENCE is the reworking of a course of lectures given in Trinity College, Cambridge; most of the chapters in **DANGEROUS THOUGHTS** are lectures given in various places, although some of them are chapters from other books. In both volumes the affability, the humor, and the shrewdness of the authors are, as one would expect, everywhere present.

Since Sir Arthur has contributed so much of value to astrophysics, and since Mr. Hogben has contributed so much to biology, both men deserve respectful reading when they are discussing their specialties. Likewise, because they have both taken an interest in whatever is or can be related to their specialties, they deserve attentive reading when they discuss human affairs.

It is unfortunate, therefore, that Sir Arthur is so extremely affable, and so very charming; because he takes the reader's attention from what he is talking about and attracts it to his manner of speaking. As in previous books, humorous sallies, amusing

figures of speech, quotations from here, there, and everywhere, enliven Sir Arthur's essay and make it delightful reading, even when it is expounding what in balder prose would sound precious like nonsense. It is Sir Arthur's engaging manner and Sir Arthur's beautiful, modulated voice; but the beard that wags is the beard of Plato. It is all very well, of course, for a man to worship Plato as thoroughly as he likes; but it is not proper for a physical scientist to slip Plato in under the tent and make him a part of the show, and that is more or less what Sir Arthur does.

In the first place, aside from the chapters which deal with the technicalities of physics, Sir Arthur is very much inclined to indulge in verbal logic. Without so much as an apology, he adopts the idealist's dualism, and then lets go. For instance, he says, "Generalizations that can be reached epistemologically have a security which is denied to those that can only be reached empirically". What, one must ask, can a person do with a statement like that? You believe it or you don't believe it: you pay your money and you take your choice. One thing you can't do is discuss it. Likewise, when he continues with a discussion of *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge, the reader who is endeavoring to understand him from the point of view of physics is pretty sure to feel lost before very long. But this is only the beginning. "The fundamental laws and constants of physics are wholly subjective", says Sir Arthur; and he goes on to say, "It seems probable that wherever effects of objective governance have appeared they have been regarded as an indication that the subject is 'outside physics', e.g. conscious volition, or possibly life". In other words, what we are accustomed to referring to as objective is subjective, and vice versa. Nobody can object very strenuously to all this argument except that it doesn't mean anything. We can't do anything with this reversed vocabulary that we couldn't do before it was reversed. We can't get any farther along on our way, and we are not any closer to anything, by saying that volition and life are objective than by saying that they are subjective. As a matter of fact if we want to get anywhere we usually don't talk that way at all.

But there is more to come, more of a thoroughly Platonic nature:

By recognising other consciousnesses as coequal with our own we had already committed ourselves to the acceptance of a realm outside the individual consciousness. Nevertheless it is a new step of great magnitude when, by the discovery of similar structures common to all normal consciousnesses, we introduce an external world containing the original structure of which they are the reproductions. Since the external world is introduced as a receptacle of structure, our knowledge of it is limited to structural knowledge; and physical science is the study of this structural knowledge. But, should occasion arise, the function of the external world can be enlarged so as to comprise more than our physical knowledge. If we find reason to be dissatisfied with a purely physical world external to ourselves, there is room for a spiritual interpretation of the 'something' of which the physical universe is only the abstract structure.

We do not, to begin with, put forward any theory as to *how* the original structure in the external world comes to be reproduced as a structure of sensations in consciousness; we merely recognise that, ruling out coincidence, the occurrence of the same structure in many consciousnesses is a sign that an original structure exists in a realm outside those consciousnesses.

That gives the show away. Whatever has been done in the last two thousand years, it has not influenced Sir Arthur's thinking to any alarming extent. However affable and however delightful he may be, he is no safer as a guide than any other assumer of assumptions and wielder of words.

Mr. Hogben on the other hand, while not quite so urbane and charming as Sir Arthur, is equally entertaining and somewhat spicier. More than most of his colleagues he makes a particular effort to approach whatever subject he is discussing in the scientific manner; that is, he endeavors to discover all relevant facts, to deal with them operationally, and to present the results of his inquiry as a basis for further investigation.

Mr. Hogben states his hypotheses as hypotheses, and suggests how facts may be investigated in the light of these hypotheses. He makes clear that his notions and peculiarities are his notions and peculiarities; so that although he is fully as crotchety a human being as Sir Arthur, all his crochets are merely that and nothing more. It is incredible, for instance, that any one who writes

as well as Mr. Hogben and delights in as many activities as he does, should show such appalling incomprehension of the fine arts as he does in *DANGEROUS THOUGHTS*. It is incredible that any one who writes so well should have no remote notion of the function of literature; yet Mr. Hogben states his shortcomings so very plainly that there is no mistaking them. Equally plainly he states his superstitions and personal prejudices. Yet always when dealing with a subject—and he deals with a variety of subjects—he makes every effort to leave personal whim and fancy out of his calculations.

Especially when he discusses economic matters, we feel that the scientific approach is unusually fortunate. For although there is a good deal of Marxism that Mr. Hogben quite obviously would like to take stock in, he is just as obviously unable to put any faith in it. He feels apparently that Marxism is better religion than most, but that no religion with its faiths and shibboleths is going to do us any good in facing problems which have to be solved. The way to solve problems, Mr. Hogben feels, is to get all relevant facts and investigate them in the light of hypotheses, and then abide by the results of the inquiry. Consequently it is a matter of no particular interest to him whether volition is objective or subjective, or whether other consciousnesses exhibit the same structure as his own, which is the structure imposed on them and the physical world by another consciousness.

Mr. Hogben seems to be unworried by the realization that the chances are against his finding out all about everything or discovering a fool-proof philosophical formula that will crank out the right answers. In fact, he very clearly states that he sees no reason to suppose that philosophers who do not understand scientific method are the ones who should be intrusted with the interpretation of scientific research. Likewise, while Sir Arthur is intensely interested in the shifting and shuffling of syllables, Mr. Hogben is interested in getting the human mind busy furnishing heat and food and peace and happiness to all human beings. Here again, Mr. Hogben feels, is a problem which must be solved like any other problem. Unfortunately we have so many faiths, prejudices, and varieties of laziness that we are going to try everything first before we attempt to be reasonable. As a result

we may wait too long, because the fools are always busy and the wise men few in number.

Both *THE PHILOSOPHY OF PHYSICAL SCIENCE* and *DANGEROUS THOUGHTS* are excellent examples of what a scientist can do when he sets out to write literature for the intelligent layman. While Sir Arthur, however, busies himself in talking charmingly, Mr. Hogben presents matters for every one's serious consideration. What Sir Arthur talks about is interesting material for a select library; what Mr. Hogben talks about is the business of human survival and decent life. Sir Arthur's way of talking, like that of most seers, makes him sound as if he were profound. The chances are he is not profound, but bottomless. Mr. Hogben does not sound overwhelmingly important, yet simply because he stimulates and does not preach he probably conveys the vital importance of his discussions to his readers. Sir Arthur elegantly discusses his own peculiar notions; Mr. Hogben discusses what is of greatest importance for us all.

Of course an idealist will almost literally substitute Hogben for Eddington and Eddington for Hogben in what is here written.

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TO live within limits, to want one thing, or very few things, very much and love them dearly, cling to them, survey them from every angle, become one with them—that is what makes the poet, the artist, the human being.

—GOETHE.





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